THE AFRICANS' PERCEPTION OF THE UNITED STATES' POST-9/11 AFRICA
POLICY AND AFRICOM

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In that regard, they see the creation of a dedicated combatant command, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), as the reflection of the dramatic evolution in the US policymakers' perceptions of US interests in Africa."

However, the deployment of that unprecedentedly vigorous strategy is facing the reluctance of significant segments of the African intellectual and political elite, due essentially to China's increasing influence, the push-back effect of the War on Terror, AFRICOM's weak security concept, and the continent's marked preference for collective security systems built around its regional organizations and the United Nations.

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ABSTRACT

THE AFRICANS' PERCEPTION OF THE UNITED STATES' POST- 9/11 AFRICA POLICY AND AFRICOM by CPT Moussa Diop MBOUP (Senegal), 183 pages.

The United States' post-9/11 global strategy demonstrates an interest in Africa that contrasts with decades of relative indifference. The 2006 National Security Strategy has stated the United States' commitment to promote security, stability, democracy, and economic prosperity in the continent. Yet, beyond these idealist declarations of good intentions, some foreign policy experts consider that the turnaround in the United States' Africa policy stems from the rising value of the continent for tangible American economic and security interests. They hold the actual objectives of the United States to be to secure its access to energy sources, to counter global terrorism, and to contain the influence of China.

In that regard, they see the creation of a dedicated combatant command, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), as the reflection of the dramatic evolution in the US policymakers' perceptions of US interests in Africa."

However, the deployment of that unprecedentedly vigorous strategy is facing the reluctance of significant segments of the African intellectual and political elite, due essentially to China's increasing influence, the push-back effect of the War on Terror, AFRICOM's weak security concept, and the continent's marked preference for collective security systems built around its regional organizations and the United Nations.

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To my parents, to whom I am eternally indebted.

On nous tue, on ne nous déshonore pas.

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ACRONYMS

ACOTA	African Contingency Operations Training Assistance
ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
ADS	Approved Destination Status
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ANC	African National Congress
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AVIC I	Aviation Industries of China I
CASDP	Common African Security and Defence Policy
CATIC	China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Cooperation
CDB	China Development Bank
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahelo-Sahelan States
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSSDCA	Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in Africa
DCMA	Deputy to the Commander for Civil Military Activities
DCMO	Deputy to the Commander for Military Operations
DICON	Defense Industry Corporation of Nigeria

DoD	US Department of Defense
DoS	US Department of State
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (United Nations)
DRS	Department of Intelligence and Security (Algeria)
EASCI	East African Counterterrorism Initiative
EASTBRIG	Eastern Brigade (African Standby Force)
EBA	Everything But Arms
ECOBRIG	ECOWAS Brigade
ECOMICI	ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPZ	Economic Processing Zone
EUCOM	United States European Command
EXIMBANK	Export and Import Bank of China
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FARS	Saharan Revolutionary Armed Front
FDC	Democratic Front for Renewal
FDLS	Democratic Front for the Liberation of the Sahara
FLA	Air-and-Azawak Liberation Front
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organizations
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat

GTD	Global Terrorism Database
GWOT	Global War on Terror
ICAT	IGAD Capacity Building Program Against Terrorism
ICG	International Crisis Group
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks (United Nations)
IRTPA	Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act
ISDSC	Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (SADC)
ISPDC	Inter-State Defence and Security Committee
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peace Training Center
LANTCOM	United States Atlantic Command
LRA	Lord Resistance Army
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MDJT	Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Nongovernmental Organizations
NORTHCOM	United States Northern Command
NPC	National People's Congress
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum
OAU	Organization of African Unity

OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OEF-TS	Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans-Sahara
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACOM	United States Pacific Command
PCASED	Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy
PEPFAR	Presidential Emergency Plan for Aids Relief
PSC	Peace and Security Council (African Union)
PSI	Pan-Sahel Initiative
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RECAMP	Reinforcement of Africa's Peacekeeping Capacity
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policies
SCAC	South China Airlines Company
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
SPTT	Special Preferential Tariffs Treatment
START	Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
STRICOM	United States Strike Command
TSCTI	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative
UCP	Unified Command Plan
UNAMID	United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur

UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USNAVEUR	US Naval Forces Europe (EUCOM)
WOT	War on Terror

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Foreigners will continue to look to America. The decline in American influence
overseas is not likely to endure. Most want the United States to be the
indispensable nation, but they look to us to put forward better ideas rather than
just walk away from the table, content to play our own game.
                                                    Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Jr.
                        Hearing on the Implementation of Smart Power: Setting an Agenda for
                        National Security Reform, US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye testified recently before Congress that the

typical perception of the United States' Africa policy, among African elites, is less than

positive.[1] Such a general opinion is the accumulation of countless grievances that are not

always objective, founded, or even rational. However, many foreign policy experts tend

to agree that this perception is largely the legacy of the past relationships between the

United States and the nations of the continent.[2] Although these relations have been

largely less confrontational than with some other regions of the world, such as the Middle

East or certain parts of Asia and Latin America, a significant amount of mistrust has

accumulated on the African side.[3] Even if the former European colonial powers are the

usual targets of the educated Africans' resentment, many also recriminate against what

they perceive as a United States' policy of abandonment and self-interest with regard to

Africa.[4]

Indeed, the foreign policy of the United States has never given prominent

attention to Africa, especially from the end of the Cold War to the 9/11 terrorist attacks

and the ensuing globalization of America's national security strategy. At the collapse of

the Soviet Union in 1991, the euphoric interventionism of the New World Order gave the

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impression of a possible increased involvement of the United States in the continent. However, that illusion almost instantly died in the streets of Mogadishu in October 1993 and Africa returned to its previous status: an afterthought in the foreign policy of the United States. Ever since, the prospect of a peace enforcement operation of the United States in Africa has remained politically untenable to American leaders. However, one must keep in mind that it was not too long ago that the thought of allowing American female military personnel in direct combat situations was politically untenable as well. Operation Iraqi Freedom has laid that political hot potato to rest permanently.

It was patently obvious during the Cold War that the African continent, *per se*, did not have a tangible strategic value for the United States, whether in economic, military, or diplomatic areas. The African states hardly ever represented more than mere pawns on the global chessboard opposing the two antagonist blocs.[5] Accordingly, the attention of the United States for them ebbed and flowed along with its intermittent perception of their values in a game in which real stakes were not on the continent. As often stated by American africanists, the Africa policy of the United States in that period had little to do with Africa.[6]

In reality, the African continent represented such an insignificant value in the minds of the American policymakers that they almost never bothered to develop an Africa policy.[7] In many aspects, the term "Africa policy" would be an overstatement. That largely inappropriate formulation could give the false impression of a deliberate and sustained agenda, with a clearly discernible purpose. Instead, the "US foreign policy in Africa [has been] unsteady and reactive, allowing events and crises to drive policy."[8]

The historic reality is an inconsistent crisis-to-crisis policy, with frequent strategic shifts, with containing the communist influence as the only constant objective.9

African intellectuals even usually consider that the United States opted for a deliberate absence of policy, with non-interventionism, indifference, and the prioritization of the interests of the United States being the exclusive guidelines. Whether this non-policy policy was a deliberate option is a question of subjective debate. Still, the continent actually lacked the strategic incentives, in comparison with Europe, Japan, and the Middle East, that would have led the Africa policy of the United States to stabilize and adopt lasting patterns. Furthermore, the lack of concerned American domestic constituencies or noteworthy pressure groups exposed the United States' Africa policy to the shifting moods of low-level State Department officials. Even the level of concern and measurable impact of the Black-American interest groups have been negligible, with the exception that they had an undeniable influence on the dramatic shift in the attitude of the United States towards the South African Apartheid regime in the mid-eighties.10

As stated above, containing the communist influence worldwide was nearly the single motive of the United States' interest in Africa. However, the continent remained a peripheral theater of this global antagonism compared to other regions of the globe. The Cold War kept the United States focused on Europe, Asia, and South America where the stakes were higher and where it was in closer contact with the communist bloc. Consequently, Africa has hardly ever been more than an inconsequential concern, entrusted primarily to the former European colonial powers.

France, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Portugal, acting in the name of the western bloc, assumed the responsibility of overseeing the African

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states and establishing buffer zones against the communist influence. To that effect, they maintained an important diplomatic, economic, and military presence after the independence of their colonies. France, in particular, kept close and constraining strategic ties with its former colonies, which, in fact, also intended to thwart the influence of the United States in what it considered as its exclusive sphere of influence. Nevertheless, objective partnership has been the dominant trait of the French-American relations in Africa, although they have fluctuated between rivalry and collaboration. Still, France was the only side to have critical interests at stake. In contrast with the relative disinterest of the United States, Paris tied its former colonies to the metropole with a system of diplomatic, economic, cultural, and defense agreements. The defense cooperation agreements, for instance, allowed the maintenance of a permanent French military foothold in strategic African hubs such as Abidjan, Dakar, Djibouti, Libreville, and Ndjamena. From 1960 to 2002, France conducted several military operations in its former colonial stronghold, intervening directly in the internal affairs of its de facto satellites, in defense of the integrity of what it considered as the foundation of its policy of grandeur.

In contrast, the United States erected military non-interventionism as a pillar of its Africa policy. Undeniably, the Africa policy knew a considerable boost when the independence of several African states in the 1950s-1960s and the collapse of the formal European colonial hegemony created a strategic opportunity for Nikita Khrushchev's aggressive African strategy. However, that surge remained limited to providing military and financial support to some anticommunist regimes. In some instances, the United States resorted to proxy wars against the Soviet-Cuban tandem such as in the Angolan civil war. However, the United States was all the more so reluctant to intervene in Africa

when it became evident, especially from the seventies, that the communist threat on the continent was largely overstated and that the West African states had developed such tight political and economic links with the western bloc that the penetration of the Soviet influence was deemed improbable.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar antagonism further diminished Africa's already meager strategic significance for the United States. The disappearance of the anticommunist rationale meant the rapid recession of America's involvement, especially in the Horn of Africa. In West Africa, the United States had even less inclination to interfere in the explosion of internal conflicts and chronic instability that coincided with the end of the Cold War. Even the bloodshed in Liberia, despite its historic ties with the United States, failed to provoke a significant shift in America's resolute passivity.

With the end of the Cold War, the United States' policymakers for Africa not only lacked incentives, but they also lost the framework that had guided their orientations concerning African issues. Although Africa was only peripheral in that framework, the struggle against the communist bloc represented a critical concern for the United States. With the collapse of the Soviet camp, there was no more critical concern that could interest the United States in Africa, even distantly, and provoke its willingness to get involved in that region.[11]

Nevertheless, the American post Cold War policymakers strove to build a new framework for the United States' African policy. Many stated the necessity of containing the pervasive instability in the third world which, particularly in Africa, had followed the end of the Cold War. Others insisted on the themes of collective security, promoting

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democracy, or North-South interdependence. Evidently, none of these questions represented critical concerns for the United States, at least compared to the West-East enmity of the Cold War. None of them could constitute a compelling motivation for the United States to accentuate its involvement in African affairs. In fact, the end of the Cold War clarified the major difference between Africa and the other parts of the globe. Africa was the only region in which the United States could choose not to intervene. The United States is a constant and immediate force in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, but not in Africa, that is until 9/11 occurred.[12]

Apparently, the Bush Administration's lesson-learned from the 2001 terrorist attacks could be that there is no longer any region of the globe from which the United States could choose to be absent.[13] Even Africa holds an unprecedented strategic value in the global and preemptive security strategy. This reversed strategic orientation appears to have developed quite fast, along with the profound reforming wave provoked by the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Started in the Horn of Africa and around the Sahara in the framework of the GWOT, as well as in the Gulf of Guinea, this renewed attention is meant to extend to the whole continent. The most evident sign of this trend is the recent creation of a dedicated unified command for Africa (AFRICOM).

In several public statements, American foreign policy officials have stressed the commitment of the United States to build an unprecedented partnership with the African nations. Yet, little evidence shows that this Africa policy has considered the African perspective and paid due attention to the specific concerns of the continent. Instead, the policy orientations on the ground have pursued objectives that are neither serving the long-term strategic interests of the United States nor meeting the expectations of the

continent, as the local chapters of the GWOT are fueling growing anti-American feelings in countries such as Nigeria that are critical for its energy security strategy. Consequently, this Africa policy has not yet garnered the support of the Africans, exposing AFRICOM to growing mistrust and skepticism.

<center>Problem Statement</center>

The United States' post 9/11 global strategy demonstrates an interest in Africa that contrasts with decades of relative disinterest.[14] The debate over the actual motivations of this unprecedented attention is intense. The Bush Administration's 2006 National Security Strategy has stated the commitment of the United States to promote security, stability, democracy, and economic prosperity on the continent.[15] Yet, beyond these idealist declarations of good intentions, some foreign policy experts consider the turnaround in the United States' Africa policy to be the consequence of the rising strategic value of the continent for tangible American economic and security interests.[16] Despite the official denials,[17] they hold the actual objectives of the agenda of the United States in Africa to be to secure its access to energy sources, to counter global terrorism, and to contain the growing influence of China.[18] Indeed, Africa is becoming one of the cornerstones of the United States' strategy to reduce by 75% its dependence on the Middle Eastern oil before 2025.[19] According to the United States Energy Information Administration, cited by The Heritage Foundation, North Africa and southern Africa represented 18.6% of America's 2005 oil imports against 17.4 from the Middle East. In the early months of 2006, the proportions were respectively 20.1 from Africa against 15.5 from the Middle East.[20] The growth in natural gas could even be more important.[21] The value of Africa's oil for the United States mainly resides in its proximity to American

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refineries, its lightness and low sulfur content, the offshore location of the main deposits

that requires a limited presence on the ground, and the marginal consumption of the

African nations.[22]
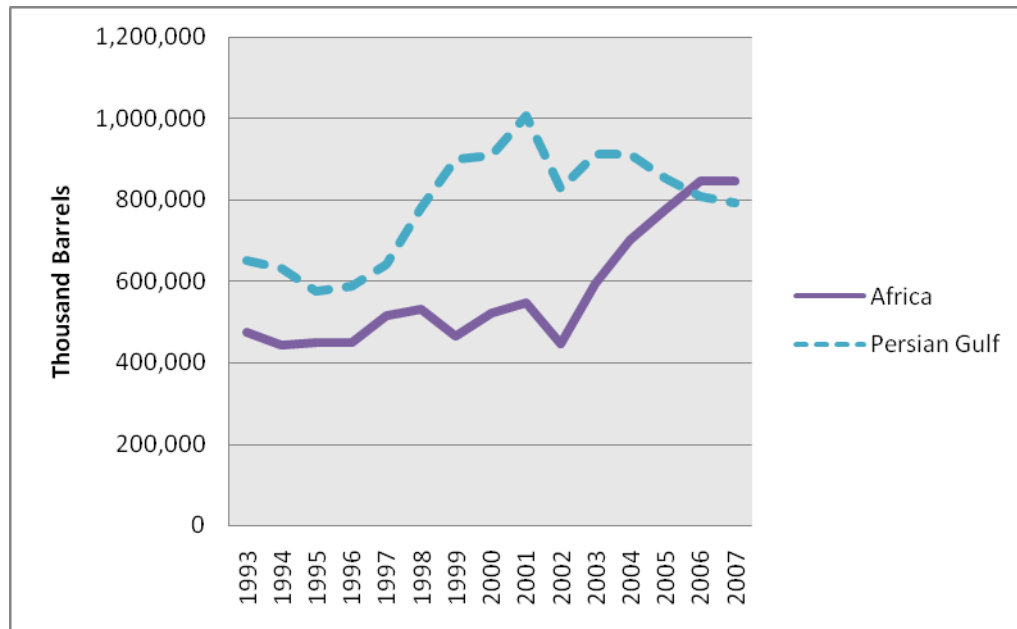
Figure 1.   US crude oil imports from Africa and the Persian Gulf
Data Source: US Energy Information Administration (EIA), Department of Energy, February
2008. http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_ep00_im0_mbbl_m.htm.

The GWOT as well has been proposed as one of the rationales for the rising

strategic importance of the African continent for the United States' policymakers. In the

framework of the fight against international terrorism that "has become, beyond any

doubt, the top national security priority for the United States," security experts have

stressed Africa's potential of becoming a major concern.[23] Many point at the continent's

failed or failing states incapable of controlling their territories, its war-torn ungoverned

areas that could provide safe havens to terrorist organizations, its rampant poverty, and

the progress of radical Islam in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, Sudan, Nigeria, and South Africa.[24] Chronic terrorist activity in Algeria and Morocco since the 1990s, and principally the attacks against the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salam in1998, had already demonstrated the existence of significant threats on the continent. Finally, some foreign policy pundits argue that China's growing presence in Africa, which has started a competition for the energy resources of the continent, has added to the concerns of Washington.[25]

According to these realist schools of international relations, the creation by the Bush Administration[26] of a dedicated geographic combatant command on February 2006, the United States Africa Command, "reflects an evolution in the policymakers' perceptions of U.S. strategic interests in Africa."[27]

American foreign policy and defense officials have made multiple statements emphasizing AFRICOM's intention to pioneer a new age in the United States' Africa policy. The concept of regional combatant commands is, of course, nothing new in itself. Since its creation in 1946, consecutive to America assuming a global role after the Second World War, "the Outline Command Plan - and later Unified Command Plan (UCP) - has been one of the primary instruments for advancing the security interests of the United States."[28] Nonetheless, AFRICOM is meant to revolutionize the concept through an unprecedented non-combat focus, interagency integration, and by laying emphasis on an enabling supportive relationship with the nations and international organizations in its area of responsibility.

First, as previously stated, AFRICOM being a geographic command dedicated specifically to the African continent represents, *per se*, is a meaningful turnaround. Until

the creation of AFRICOM, "the UCP either overlooked Africa or placed it under the responsibility of commands that did not have the continent as a primary concern."[29] The UCP integrated the continent "as late as 1952 by integrating only the French Algerian departments to the European Command (EUCOM) and giving that command planning responsibilities for Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia."[30] In reality, North Africa in itself remained an indirect concern and only mattered for its importance with regard to the defense of the southern flank of Europe.[31] The accession to independence of the sub-Saharan colonies provoked the integration of the rest of the continent into the UCP in 1960, mainly due to fears that they could fall under the influence of the communist bloc. The Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) received responsibility for that portion of the continent, "with EUCOM retaining responsibility for North Africa. Subsequently, the Strike Command (STRICOM) gained responsibility for sub-Saharan Africa at its creation in 1962."[32] The continent then remained unassigned from 1971 to 1982, following the suppression of STRICOM.[33] In 1982, the biennial review of the UCP, mandated by Title 10 of the United States Code in 1979, placed much of sub-Saharan Africa under EUCOM, since close ties persisted between the former colonies and Europe.[34] Seven Eastern African nations – Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and later Eritrea – fell under the Central Command (CENTCOM), while the Pacific Command (PACOM) gained the islands of the Indian Ocean, mainly Madagascar.[35]

Before AFRICOM, the continent was therefore a shared responsibility between EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM, which largely signified its status as a backwater of the United States' strategic concerns, especially during the Cold War. Furthermore, this

shared responsibility has often represented a relatively important obstacle to a focused, comprehensive, and consistent United States strategy in Africa.

In some cases, the boundaries between the areas of responsibility of these commands have acted as seams that prevented a coherent action. The crisis in Sudan, for instance, has revealed one of those seams, Sudan being under the responsibility of CENTCOM while EUCOM is in charge of neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic where the crisis has important ramifications. AFRICOM is expected to eliminate these seams and allow a focused and coherent response to African issues. Most probably, its area of responsibility will cover the continent except for Egypt, which will remain under the responsibility of CENTCOM. The area of responsibility of AFRICOM will also comprise the Atlantic Ocean islands of Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, and the Indian Ocean islands of Madagascar, Mauritius, the Comoros, and the Seychelles.

Furthermore, the designers of AFRICOM have stated their intent to singularize the new command by giving it a non-military focus, a move that they expect will calm fears of a militarization of the United States' Africa policy. Despite their important diplomatic roles, the existing unified commands have a preeminent war-fighting purpose. CENTCOM, for instance, is largely dedicated to "deterring and defeating state and transnational aggression" within its area of responsibility that spans from the Horn of Africa, through the Arabian Gulf region, into Central Asia.[36] The combatant command role of CENTCOM has been highlighted by the campaigns in Iraq (Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)). Similarly, the mission of EUCOM is to "maintain ready forces to conduct the full range of operations unilaterally or in concert with coalition partners" throughout Europe,

a portion of the Middle East, and Africa until the activation of AFRICOM as a unified command on October 1, 2008.[37] As for PACOM, its mission is to "deter aggression, advance regional security cooperation, respond to crises, and fight to win" in the Asia-Pacific region.[38] In contrast, AFRICOM's initial proposed mission statement was to be a supportive role, as the instrument of the United States' assistance to help find African solutions to African problems, with an emphasis on "humanitarian assistance, civic action, military professionalism, border and maritime security assistance, and response to natural disasters."[39] American officials, such as Henry Ryan, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, have repeatedly stressed the non-military purpose of AFRICOM, insisting that the new unified combatant command will not imply the deployment of American troops or bases once it becomes operational. Mr. Ryan declared in a news briefing following a tour to Africa in preparation for the activation of AFRICOM: "AFRICOM is not meant to fight wars."[40] President Bush, in his initial statement on the new command, underlined AFRICOM's dedication "to promote [the] common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa."[41] To some extent, the mission of AFRICOM tends to resemble the latest responsibilities of the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), especially the humanitarian assistance and human rights chapters, but AFRICOM intends to bring the non-military focus to an unprecedented level.

Additionally, and although being organized by the United States Department of Defense (DoD), AFRICOM intends to reach unparalleled levels of interagency integration. The Department of State (DoS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will play a leading role in the nascent command.

This integration is expected to not only reinforce the perception of a non-military focus, but also to respond to growing criticism in Congress and DoS against what some consider as DoD's undue interference with foreign policy development.[42] This strategic option has already translated into the designation of a senior American diplomat, Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, as AFRICOM's Deputy Commander for Civil-Military Activities (DCMA). This is the first time that a civilian has held a command responsibility within a regional command. Her counterpart, a military officer, Navy Vice Admiral Robert T. Moeller, is Deputy to the Commander for Military Operations (DCMO).[43]

Likewise, the strategic communication plan accompanying AFRICOM has laid heavy emphasis on the supporting role of the command as a means of undermining criticism against a hegemonic Africa policy. In a briefing to African Union officials in Addis Ababa, General William E. Ward, the freshly appointed AFRICOM commander, insisted on the command's focus on building partnership capacity.[44]

Whatever the motivations behind the United States' Africa policy, and despite the reassuring statements on the non-military focus of AFRICOM, it is safe to say that the development of what intends to be an unprecedentedly vigorous strategy is facing the reluctance of significant segments of the African elite, particularly among the political leadership.[45] This reluctance will certainly represent a serious challenge for that strategy and the success of AFRICOM. Recent developments indicate that this might already be the tendency. Most of the continent has not rolled out the welcome mat. Several African states have declined proposals to host AFRICOM facilities.[46] The African media, in general, does not show much enthusiasm for AFRICOM and the renewed interest of the United States in the continent. In a resurgence of Africa's old anti-colonial and nationalist

feelings they warn against a looming American neo-imperialist and oil-greedy domination. For several of its African partners, "the United States has become to be perceived as well-meaning, but unreliable."[47] Representative Donald M. Payne, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health of the Committee on Foreign Affairs has grasped this tendency:

At issue is how the administration intends to make sure that the new command enhances our relationship with African countries rather than becoming a source of tension and mistrust. […] Africans themselves seem somewhat skeptical and perhaps downright cynical about the intentions of this new command and so it appears as though we have started out on the wrong foot. There are some who think this effort is a reaction to the presence of the Chinese in Africa. There are others who believe that we are establishing forward locations from which to fight the global war on terror. Still others are convinced that the United States' intent is on protecting oil resources on the continent. I suspect that there is an element of truth to each of these rumors.[48]

AFRICOM, in particular, might face a challenging trust deficit. Already, the dominant discourse in the African media is that the humanistic rhetoric accompanying AFRICOM is merely a Trojan horse for a self-serving agenda.[49] The African editorial lines on the issue generally echo Laocoon's warning to the Trojans: "*Equo ne credite Teucri/ Quidquid id est, Timeo Danaos et dona ferrentes.(Do not trust the Horse, Whatever it is/ I fear the Greeks even bearing gifts)."*[50]

Additionally, the prospect of a greater involvement of the United States in Africa raises the concerns of sub-regional hegemons, such as South Africa and Nigeria, out of fears that it might challenge their preeminence in their spheres of influence.[51] The

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Defence Minister of South Africa, Mosiuoa Lekota, declared bluntly in August 2007 that

AFRICOM should stay out of the African continent. He even refused to receive

AFRICOM's Commander, General William E. Ward, who was touring the continent in

order to eliminate what the DoD was calling "misconceptions" about the command. [52]

Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Ojo Maduekwe, adopted a similar stance during a visit to

Washington: "Nigeria did not endorse the presence of the US African Military Command

(AFRICOM) on the continent" and "is opposed to any United States base in West

Africa.[53] Morocco, Libya, and Algeria had already separately rejected the prospect of

hosting the new American geographic command.[54] To date, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,

Liberia's recently elected president, has been the only African leader to welcome the

creation of AFRICOM.

If the proactive United States' post 9/11 Africa policy is to meet its objectives,

and if the goal of AFRICOM is to be more deeply involved in African security and

development issues, a serious effort needs to be put in to understanding and eliminating

the mistrust and skepticism of the Africans. This might be a *sine qua non* condition for

the United States to build a lasting and mutually beneficial partnership with a region that

it has considered heretofore as marginal to American interests, an impression reinforced

by a decade of disengagement since the end of the Cold War.[55] Understanding Africa's

reluctance would also feed the development of a relevant strategic communication plan

aimed at restoring the image of the United States' foreign policy towards Africa and

winning the support of the African elite for AFRICOM.

Understanding and eliminating the Africans' reluctance is all the more relevant

since most Africans less and less view the United States as the solver of Africa's

problems, or the guarantor of Africa's future. A dramatic change is taking place at a fast

pace. Since the nineteenth century, Africa's almost exclusive interlocutors have been the

Western nations, whether the former European colonial powers or the United States.

Ultimately, even the desperate efforts of the Soviet Union during the Cold War or the

Non-Aligned movement failed to break that tête-à-tête. This was particularly true in

terms of economic and political relations. Up to the middle of the twentieth century,

France, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium, and Spain ruled much of the continent.

Even after their independence, many African nations remained under the influence of

their former European rulers, particularly in the French sphere of influence. A significant

part of the interactions of these nations with the rest of the world was still channeled

through, if not directed, by their former colonial masters. Their economic dependence on

the West was almost exclusive, especially with the United States, either bilaterally or

multilaterally through the Bretton-Woods institutions. However, increasingly numerous

competitors - China, India, South Korea, Brazil, Malaysia, to name a few - now offer the

African nations more and more attractive and credible alternative trading and cooperation

partners. These are likely to compete seriously with the African agenda of the United

States.[56]

In the prospect of what is already becoming a fierce rivalry as global energy needs

grow dramatically, and as Africa's share in the global production of oil increases, China

possesses considerable advantages over the United States in its relations with much of

Africa. First, it does not have the controversial past relations that the United States has

with the continent. Though China is not a new player in Africa, it had never reached its

current level of involvement. The majority of the African states are just starting to

experience relations with the Chinese. Until the last five years, many did not even have

diplomatic relations with China, but with Taiwan. Actually, China's main objective on

the continent had been so far, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, to secure diplomatic

support against Taipei. Conversely, Africa now amounts for one third of China's oil

imports, which is likely to expand along with the annual 11% increase in the energy

needs of Beijing, leading to an enlarged Chinese footprint on the continent.[57] After

Sudan, its client since 1996, China has established a bridgehead in neighboring Chad

where the China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) is building an oil refinery. Beijing is

currently running 27 major oil and gas projects in 14 African countries.[58] Second, China

has placed very powerful financial incentives at the service of its offensive of charm in

Africa, while the United States Africa policy has to do with limited budget

authorizations.[59] The amount of Chinese trade with the continent increased by 700 % in

the 1990s and doubled in the 2002-2004 period.[60] Beijing has now overtaken the World

Bank in lending to Africa. Since 2005, it has cancelled $10 billion in debt for 31 African

countries and lent $8 billion to Nigeria, Mozambique, and Angola alone. That same year,

the World Bank's total loans for all of Africa hardly reached $2.3 billion.[61] Third,

China's Africa strategy is all the better received by the African political leadership, in

general, since it relies on a mutual noninterference policy[62] and is not subordinated to

democratic, human rights, or good governance considerations.[63] China sold $240 million

worth of military equipment to Mugabe's Zimbabwe in 2004 and has blocked several

resolutions of the United Nations Security Council against the genocidal policy of Sudan

in Darfur.[64] Finally, Third World solidarity might play in China's favor. Many Africans

perceive China's rise as the revenge of the poor against the rich. According to a Brussels-based China expert of the German Marshall Fund public policy think-tank:

> China is the most self-conscious rising power in history and is desperate to be seen as a benign force as well as to learn from the mistakes of the existing major powers and previous rising powers. It sees its modern national story as anticolonial - about surpassing the "century of humiliation" at the hands of the colonial powers- and still thinks itself, in many ways, as a part of the developing world.[65]

Compared to the chilly reception of AFRICOM, the Chinese African offensive seems to be quite successful. In 3-5 November 2006, 48 African heads of states attended the inaugural Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). In a January-February 2006 tour of eight African nations, President Hu Jintao secured several energy agreements, including a $4 billion dollar deal with Nigeria. In an adroit diplomatic move, he declared in a speech at the University of Pretoria: "China has never imposed its will or unequal practices on other countries and will never do so in the future."[66] Some African leaders, such as the Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lam Akol, seem to have already jumped on the new wagon

> We learned that we don't need the Americans anymore. We found other avenues.[67]

Almost equally concerned by the energy needs of its booming economy, India is shifting its focus from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to Africa. In November 2007, New Delhi convened an energy summit attended by twenty-five African nations, during which it promised billions of dollars in investments in the oil and natural gas sectors.[68]

Given this strategic setting, reminiscent of the nineteenth century scramble for Africa, declarations of good intentions and handshakes may fall short of inciting the

African nations in subscribing to AFRICOM's agenda. China sits on a trillion dollars of

hard currency reserves and does not seem much bothered with humanitarian

considerations. At the same time, the deficit of the federal budget of the United States

reached $423 billion for the 2006 fiscal year according to the Office of Management and

Budget, which translates into lesser financial incentives at the disposal of the American

foreign policy. The United States Congress, for instance, has cut by half the funding for

the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), one of the flagship programs of the post 9/11

Africa policy of the Bush Administration.[69] In this context of underfunding, the Africa

policy of the United States should rely on more than courtesy visits of the AFRICOM

Commander in order to compete successfully against its rising competitors on the

continent. Africa's patent reluctance towards AFRICOM, largely signified by the recent

American decision to keep the command's headquarters in Germany for the foreseeable

future, instead of deploying it on the continent, may be the sign that the post 9/11 Africa

policy of the United States and AFRICOM are facing a serious trust challenge that

deserve close attention. The spokesperson of AFRICOM, who issued the announcement,

accompanied it with comments that leave no doubt about the fact that the reluctance of

the Africans motivated the decision:

> Now you have governments or members of governments making decisions on
> whether or not to work with Africa Command without necessarily understanding
> what it is we do. From Stuttgart, we can show people what we do and let it evolve
> from there.[70]

Thesis Question

In many respects, it is doubtful that American policymakers expected the

Africans' cold reaction to AFRICOM. Arguably, the haste in setting the command and

the lack of extensive preliminary consultation with the African nations tend to indicate

that no significant hurdles were foreseen by the Bush administration.[71] Indeed, because

of its stated willingness to divorce itself from a policy of abandonment that the Africans

have been denouncing for decades, and because it has pledged to support "an African

continent that lives in liberty, peace and growing prosperity",[72] the post 9/11 Africa

policy could have been expected to facilitate the acceptance of the new command. The

United States' assistance to the development of Africa has more than doubled under the

Bush Administration, from $10 billion in 2000 to $23 billion in 2006.[73] President Bush

has endeavored to boost the assistance programs to Africa, some of which he inherited

from the Clinton presidency. The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), for instance, a

United States Government corporation, provides financial aid to the poorest countries of

the globe – half of the forty eligible countries as of 2008 are African – while promoting

good governance, transparency, economic freedom, and investment in people.[74] The

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) offers bilateral tax incentives for African

countries to open their economies and enable them to join the free market.[75] In addition

to these initiatives, the United States President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief

(PEPFAR), a $15 billion program spread over five years, represents "the largest

commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single

disease."[76] Polls of various reliable sources are showing that Africa is probably the only

continent that is showing a positive general perception of the United States, while this

perception is eroding in other regions of the world.[77] However, and paradoxically, we

have seen that there is an undeniable negative response to AFRICOM, which may be the

indication that the munificence of the post-9/11 Africa policy of the United States has not

managed to convince the African elites of a community of interests.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to provide an African perspective so as to help to understand the continent's negative reaction to AFRICOM. To that extent, this study seeks to address the following question:

Why did the African political leadership and intelligentsia receive AFRICOM with mistrust and skepticism, many of them rejecting the prospect of an increased military involvement of the United States on the continent?

Thesis Statement

In addressing the above question, the ultimate objective of this study is to outline the main lines of effort that AFRICOM should focus on in order to overcome the initial reluctance that it is facing in the continent. To arrive at that objective, the hypothesis that this thesis seeks to validate could be formally expressed as follows:

The countering factors that the architects of AFRICOM need to address are China's increasing diplomatic and economic influence, the push-back effect of the War on Terror, the failure of the command's security concept to address the specific security needs of the continent, and the discrepancy between that security concept and Africa's marked preference for multilateral responses to its security problems.

Accordingly, the secondary questions that this thesis will try to address are as follows:

First, how is China's influence, in the framework of what some depict as a quiet and indirect strategy that seeks to sap America's global posture, providing a more attractive alternative that enables the African political leaders to reject some of the overtures of the United States at a limited cost?

Secondly, how has the War on Terror, and the prioritization of kinetic military responses in addressing the threat on the continent, backfired against American long-term strategic interests such as the partnership that AFRICOM is proposing to the African nations?

Thirdly, why did AFRICOM's security concept fail to convince the African nations that it is a relevant response to their security problems?

Finally, is the Africans' preference for multilateral approaches to their security problems, which implies a leading role of international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations and the African Union, conflicting with AFRICOM's bilateral approach?

The rise to global power of the Chinese juggernaut might enclose an unnoticed revolution with regards to Africa. In the 1980s, meeting a Chinese in the streets of Africa was rare, apart from embassy personnel and technical assistance teams. Currently, estimations indicate that nearly 750,000 Chinese are settled in Africa, along with 900 Chinese companies.[78] The China-Africa total two-way trade (imports and exports) grows by an average 40% annually. From $10 billion in 2000, it jumped to $18 billion in 2003, $35 billion in 2005, and is expected to reach $100 billion by 2010.[79] Despite the criticism for its lack of consideration for democracy and human rights, mainly from the West, China is perceived by the Africans in an increasingly more favorable way than its potential competitors.[80] This favorable trend is perhaps more significant among the African political leadership. Festus Mogae, the president of Botswana, one of the best managed countries in Africa, and a known friend of the West, declared recently in an interview with a British news agency:

China treats us as equals, while the West treats us as former subjects. That is the reality. I prefer the attitude of China to that of the West.[81]

Most probably, China's soft-power strategy and noninterference policy are the key factors of its positive perception by the African leaders, many of whom may find it convenient to deal with a partner that provides them with substantial financial assistance without meddling with their domestic affairs. However, this is only a partial explanation of China's positive image among African leaders and educated elite. The reality is that many Africans are confident, rightly or wrongly, in the innocuous character of the Chinese influence. This influence, translated into tangible funds and diplomatic support, might be the factor that enables some African nations to decline American initiatives such as AFRICOM when they consider that they oppose their interests, which would have been almost unthinkable a decade ago. A case such as Sudan, beyond China's negative influence on human rights, might foreshadow the state of US-Africa relations within one or two decades: an erosion of America's clout encouraged by Beijing.

In addition to China's growing influence, the effects of the WOT might have raised some of the hurdles that AFRICOM is struggling with. By focusing the security dimension of the renewed Africa policy on the WOT, the United States' policymakers may have lacked a long-term strategic vision. The WOT in Africa has not only achieved disputable gains in advancing the security interests of the United States, as exemplified by the worsening situation in Somalia, but it has also complicated the building of an enduring and confident partnership with the continent. First, prioritizing the WOT has led the African leadership and elite opinions, in general, to judge the Africa policy as self-serving and dismissive of their own security interests. That perception may have defeated

AFRICOM's proposal of a mutual beneficial security partnership. As a result, the command's pledge to assist in promoting peace and stability on the continent may be still clashing with a deep-rooted conviction that the United States are still only concerned with its own security interests.[82] This is not a new complaint on the continent, but the prioritization of the WOT has strongly contributed to ingraining it. Second, the anti-terror narrative and the kinetic operations conducted under the WOT are more and more perceived as destabilizing for some nations of the continent, especially those with significant Muslim populations, as they may generate or exacerbate religious divides and feed Islamic radicalism. As they observe the situations in Afghanistan and the Middle East, most Africans are convinced that an increased American military presence may represent a greater risk of instability and insecurity by wrapping them in conflicts that are not their own, without any benefit for themselves. Third, an increasing pressure is exerted on the political leadership by public opinions, human rights activists, and civil society groups in reaction to a perceived negative effect of the WOT on civil liberties and political freedom. For many of these regimes, rejecting any direct or indirect link with the WOT has become a matter of political survival.

Another serious weakness of AFRICOM's approach might have been to put forward a concept that did not convince its future partners that it could represent a credible solution to their security problems. Part of the reason for that may have been the command's shallow and shy security concept, as well as the confusing interagency integration concept that accompanied it. First, AFRICOM may have failed to propose the bold, comprehensive, and clear security package that a majority of African nations would have expected from the creation of a specific command for Africa. Instead, insisting on

the non-military focus, emphasizing civil responsibilities that normally fall under DoS

and USAID, and AFRICOM's failure to assume overtly its military nature convinced

many African leaders that the command could only be of a minimal value in meeting

their security needs. The lack of clear and consistent indications on what AFRICOM

intended to be, as well as the lack of tangible proposals with regard to security issues,

were largely interpreted as dissimulation. In that regard, AFRICOM's communication

strategy has been poorly managed. The President of Botswana, Festus Mogae, expressed

a perplexity shared by many among his peers:

> We have not taken a position [on AFRICOM] because we don't know how the
> animal will look like.[83]

With respect to the above, clarifying agency responsibilities within the renewed

Africa policy should have been a primary preoccupation. Whether a military command is

the appropriate organ for the agenda presented by AFRICOM, in particular, should have

been addressed upfront and extensively. *De facto*, much of the criticism expressed against

AFRICOM targeted that specific point. Why did the United States resort to a combatant

command to advance humanitarian and development initiatives in lieu of DoS? The

answer that tended to proliferate, in part because AFRICOM failed to face the debate

openly, was that AFRICOM is a Trojan horse that hides unavowable intentions and

whose only objective could be the militarization of the United States' Africa policy.

Finally, the African nations' leadership has shown a clear preference for

multilateral security options agreed upon under the auspices of intergovernmental

organizations such as the United Nations and the African Union.[84] In that regard, much

effort has been devoted to building a collective security system that integrates the

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) under the umbrella of the African Union and

that is closely tied to the United Nations.[85] These efforts are largely motivated by an acute conviction that only African-driven initiatives can address the continent's security problems. This trend is also reinforced by the increasing credibility of the African regional and sub-regional institutions in obtaining negotiated or enforced solutions to crisis situations, as they demonstrated with Sierra Leone and Liberia.[86] Perhaps more important with regard to AFRICOM, the impetus for this trend is given by would-be regional hegemons, such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Libya, who do not regard favorably intrusions of non-African actors in that process.[87]

Given this diplomatic background, one of AFRICOM's early mistakes may have been to give the impression of underestimating the Africans' commitment, if not their concrete success for the time being, in assuming responsibility for their own security issues. By failing to establish an early collaboration plan with the continent's institutions, and by letting the debate drift precociously to basing issues, the architects of AFRICOM have given the impression of dismissing them and disparaging the progress that they represent in the eyes of many African leaders. That unfortunate message of *fait accompli* has not only exacerbated the Africans' anti-neocolonialist feelings, and strongly irritated some locally influential actors such as South Africa and Nigeria, but it has also raised concerns for the continent's integration efforts. Consequently, some segments of the African intelligentsia have come to consider that AFRICOM can only exert a distracting, if not disrupting, effect on the efforts towards the integration of the continent. In fact, the architects of AFRICOM strived later on to correct that initial mistake, as signified by the AFRICOM Commander's visit to the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, but it appears

that they hardly succeeded in giving any impression other than hasty and confused improvisation.[88]

Assumptions

The main assumption underlining this thesis is that it should be possible for the United States to design a strategy that will meet both its national interests and the expectations of the Africans, especially in terms of enhancing stability and security and promoting democracy and good governance. There is no fundamental incompatibility between the two, but considering the perspective of the Africans in developing this strategy is an important step in gaining their willing support. What flows from this is that AFRICOM's initial missteps are redeemable and that a different approach, which would be more mindful of the African viewpoint, could allow it to overcome the initial reluctance that it is facing.

Another caveat critical to this thesis is that analyzing a phenomenon as complex as the Africans' reaction to AFRICOM does not amount to a mere inventory of arguments and counterarguments. A critical aspect of the problem is that perceptions are not necessarily objective or even rational. In reality, one should expect them to be more or less distorted by misconceptions, oversimplifications, prejudices, and accumulated mistrust. Accordingly, in analyzing perceptions, it is probably more informative to focus on people's interpretation of a given phenomenon, rather than on the absolute nature of the phenomenon. An example is AFRICOM's desperate efforts to persuade the Africans of its non-combat purpose. Despite these efforts, concerns for the militarization of the United States' Africa policy remain high among the African leadership. In this particular case, as in many others, Cartesian demonstrations tend to reveal their limits, probably

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because they overlook the subjective dimensions of the perceptions that they intend to correct.

That Africans are wrong in believing that AFRICOM is a combat-focused organization is not, or should not be, the most important concern of the command's communication strategists. What should be essential, for the communicators of the command, are the reasons why Africans hold such an opinion and how to change their perspective. Making that distinction between *perception* and *reality* is important in understanding the purpose of this thesis. For instance, whether the WOT should fuel fears of a militarization of the United States' Africa strategy is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this study focuses on why the Africans may perceive the WOT as a factor of militarization, whether this perception is grounded on reality or not. In doing this, this thesis considers that a phenomenon such as the WOT has a reality and an image, two entities that are not necessarily interchangeable, and may even be conflicting. The preconception underlining this approach is that the business of communicators is less reality than the perception of reality. Their business is less to address the reality of a concept, such as AFRICOM, than to replace a negative perception of this concept by a positive one.

Accordingly, this thesis wishes to provide simply an analysis of the Africans' perception of AFRICOM by exposing its driving factors, expecting that the identification of these factors will be instrumental in helping the command develop improved lines of effort for its entry strategy and a relevant communication plan to support it.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study resides in that obtaining an African perspective might be helpful in understanding the causes of the continent's initial reluctance towards AFRICOM. In that regard, this thesis will have fulfilled its overall purpose by identifying the general outline of what lines of operation AFRICOM will need to employ to improve the Africans' reception of the United States' renewed interest in their continent.

Africa's increased strategic value and the unprecedented importance that it gives to it with regard to tangible United States' interests offer an opportunity for recasting their relationship into a transparent, principled, and mutually beneficial partnership. Many observers believe that the Africans would readily welcome a strategic partnership with the United States, if the mistrust accumulated since the end of the Cold War is eliminated and if they have the conviction that this partnership would be beneficial for them as well. A new era in the relations between Africa and the United States is feasible, but it requires a strategy that considers both perspectives and works actively at identifying and eradicating motives of reluctance and mistrust. As Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Jr. declared before the United States Congress:

> America should have higher ambitions than being popular, but foreign opinion matters to U.S. decision-making. A good reputation fosters goodwill and brings acceptance for unpopular ventures. Helping other nations and individuals achieve their aspirations is the best way to strengthen America's reputation abroad.[89]

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature on the post 9/11 Africa policy of the United States in general, and its impact on the image of America on the continent in particular. Within this Africa policy, the Global War on Terror will receive special emphasis.

The majority of the publications on the post-9/11 Africa policy of the United States consists of articles in scholarly journals published by American foreign policy institutes and think tanks. The African continent is far from having a similar number of foreign policy institutions, which makes it difficult to identify the African academic opinion on the issue. However, the African media provides various and extensive sources that are known for conveying a rather accurate reflection of the public opinions on the continent.

Among the publications emanating from the United States, many focus on illustrating the growing strategic value of the continent for the interests of the United States, but very few go beyond this initial acknowledgement. Certainly because the emerging strategic setting is still imprecise and does not easily lend itself to describing clear outcomes, very few publications address the question of what an appropriate Africa policy should be in light of America's increasing interest in the continent.

An even smaller number of publications address the particular issue of the Africans' perception of the United States' unprecedented interest in their continent and the impact that the post-9/11 Africa policy might have had in shaping that perception. In general, the media, both in the United States and in Africa, in a shallow and factual

pattern, have exposed the negative perception that AFRICOM's initial moves have unveiled. However, almost no in-depth study, especially by foreign policy institutes or think tanks, have strived to identify the root causes of the reluctance that the Africans are displaying towards the newly formed command. Similarly, the African publications on the issue, overwhelmingly comprised of media articles, rarely go beyond the nationalistic stance. However, the striking similarity between them is that we have not found even one that has a positive approach to the prospect of an increased American military footprint on the continent.

Another striking aspect is that most of the publications visibly feed each other. In addition to being limited in number, they also present a limited variety in their approaches to the issues of the developing American Africa policy and AFRICOM. This perhaps translates the rarity of information on a strategic reorientation that is still unfolding or more probably an ambient perplexity and cautious attitude about the next steps forward.

This brief overview will comprise three main parts. The initial one will cover the strategic shift that has been taking place in the Africa policy of the United States since September 11. This initial part will seek to highlight the root causes that have led to that shift. The second part will focus on AFRICOM. AFRICOM is deemed to be a good indicator as most Africans perceive it as the spearhead of a larger American involvement in their affairs. This part will emphasize the role and place of AFRICOM in the new strategic paradigm. The final part will focus on the African chapters of the GWOT and will seek to put in evidence the strategic assessment that has led to countering terrorism being the priority of the post-9/11 Africa policy of the United States.

Africa's Increasing Strategic Value for the United States

In *A CINC for Sub-Saharan Africa? Rethinking the Unified Command Plan*, published in *Parameters*, the US Army War College Magazine, in 2000-2001, Richard G. Catoire provides an interesting overview of the evolutions of the UCP, and most of all calls for its revision in light of the growing strategic value of the continent. The overall interest of this article resides in the fact that it exposes the strategic rationale that might have led to the creation of AFRICOM. Catoire's stance is a faithful reflection of a rather common argumentation within the milieu of American africanists, advocating an Africa policy that has the continent as its sole purpose. His article begins by giving an overview of the history of the UCP and Africa, underlining the secondary status of the continent in that document. Then, he highlights the growing focus of American policy makers on Africa, stressing the inconsistency of this focus with a UCP that does not allow a coherent and comprehensive Africa policy.

Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of the US Military in Africa by Lauren Ploch (2007), Analyst in African Affairs for the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of the Congressional Research Service, provides an overview of the American strategic interests on the African continent and assesses the current American military efforts in support of these interests. It raises an interesting question for our study, which is *How are AFRICOM and US military efforts in Africa perceived by Africans and by other foreign countries, including China?* After reviewing congressional issues related to the design of AFRICOM, such as interagency coordination, structure and footprint, and headquarters location, Ploch addresses the evolution in the United States' approach towards Africa and highlights the factors that have led to a "conceptual shift in the

strategic view of Africa." The factors that she proposes are oil and global trade, maritime security, armed conflicts, terror and HIV/AIDS. Ploch highlights the increase in the economic relations between the United States and Africa, which have tripled between 1990 and 2005, and most of all she holds Africa becoming the main oil supplier of the United States to be the determining consideration. In this regard, she insists on the strategic value of Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea, in general, in the prospect of further deep-water drillings that will make Africa represent as much as 25% of American oil imports by 2015. Concerning maritime security, Ploch discusses the inability of the African nations to police their waters, allowing pervasive illegal fishing, drug trafficking, piracy, and weapons smuggling. These criminal activities have led American officials, according to the article, to seek to protect the international maritime traffic and the offshore oil production, especially in the Gulf of Guinea, the Gulf of Aden, and the waters off of Somalia. The report also stresses the role of the GWOT, which it states as the top national security priority of the Bush Administration, on a continent that Pentagon officials consider as "ripe for terrorists," as demonstrated by the Nairobi and Dar-es-Salam attacks, and its failed states and ungoverned spaces. Finally, Ploch addresses the Bush Administration's commitment to thwart the instability resulting from armed conflicts by supporting the development of African peacekeeping capabilities, as well as combating the HIV/AIDS pandemics by investing over $15 billion through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Ploch's answer to the question of the Africans' perception of the United States' Africa policy is that there is considerable apprehension and that some Africans express concerns for a neo-colonial military domination of their region. She argues that many Africans are skeptical about the

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American anti-terrorist efforts on the continent and that there is a widespread belief that

AFRICOM will serve primarily to hunt terrorists and secure oil sources. She adds that

however, some governments have welcomed AFRICOM with "cautious optimism," as

the command could potentially mean increased resources, training and security

assistance.

Political Warfare in Sub-Saharan Africa: US Capabilities and Chinese

Operations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa by Donovan C. Chau (Strategic

Studies Institutes, US Army War College, 2007) is a monograph that depicts how China

has used political warfare as a means of swaying the African nations and examines

American capabilities in using the same instrument. Chau argues that China is using

political warfare to successfully target American interests in Africa. He defines political

warfare as a nonviolent instrument of grand strategy that, in operational terms, comprises

economic assistance and the training, equipping and arming of security forces. He also

borrows Kennan's definition, which is "the employment of all the means at the command

of a nation, short of war, to achieve its national objectives." According to Chau's

analysis, political warfare, which relies primarily on the economic instrument of national

power, offers significant long-term advantages over the other instruments, including the

military one, especially with regard to partnership building, prestige and a positive

reputation. Chau affirms that, although political warfare capabilities exist within the

United States Government, especially in the armed forces, the Department of State, and

the USAID, they are not identified as such and neither coordinated or employed at the

full extent of their potential. Meanwhile, China is using this tool in a strategy that targets

countries that the United States considers as anchors of its Africa policy, Ethiopia,

Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. These countries, according to Chau, were chosen on purpose because of their importance for the Africa strategy of the United States. He adds that deploying a military command to conduct America's strategy of political warfare on the continent can only be a short-term policy, but a civilian body needs to assume this function. The military being at the forefront, according to Chau, will ultimately result in a negative perception and harm the strategic objectives that it was to advance.

Africa's New Strategic Significance by Greg Mills (The Washington Quarterly, 2004) focuses on the increasing importance of the continent for the global anti-terror strategy of the United States. It reminds us that before the September 11 attacks and the focus on the Middle East that ensued, Al Qaeda's first anti-American operations took place on the continent with the bombing of the United States embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salam. It also argues that African guerillas, as well as national armies, have commonly used terror strategies against civilian populations in conflicts such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. Although non-international in its majority, Mills claims that the terrorist threat in Africa echoes the global form of the menace and has offered an opportunity for a shared anti-terror strategy. Africa's weak states, in particular, have raised concerns in Washington, accounting for President Bush's tour of Africa in 2003, the first visit of a sitting Republican president to the continent. Prior to his visit, President Bush expressed his intention to give African nations the resources and tools to win the war against terror in conformity with their requests. However, Mills argues that the African nations' pledge to combat terrorism did not translate into concrete acts. According to the author, only seven nations out of 53 - Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Uganda, Morocco, and Ethiopia –

have joined the global war on terror and a mere twelve have ratified all the conventions

and protocols pertaining to terrorism. Mills explains this hiatus by the fact that African

political leaders are more concerned by internal terrorism than international terrorism that

uses the continent to affect Western interests.

A View from Africa by Macharia Gaitho (Foreign Policy 2003) approaches the

Africans' perception of the United States Africa policy through the levels of popularity of

the American presidents on the continent. According to Gaitho, the Africans admire

figures such as John Kennedy, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton for their alleged support to

independence, anti-colonialism, and genuine concern for the suffering of the underdog. In

contrast, they appreciate less figures such as Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and

Georges H. W. Bush who showed little concern for the continent except as a sideshow of

the Cold War or because of its strategic mineral resources. Gaitho argues that African

peoples, if not the leaders, have appreciated America's pressure on local governments for

democratic reforms and better governance. As for the current administration, Gaitho

affirms that the war in Iraq significantly tarnished its image in Africa. While Africans, in

general, considered the operations in Afghanistan as legitimate, they perceived the war in

Iraq as an attempt to seize its oil resources. The author highlights the example of public

opinion in Kenya; despite being a country that has suffered from international terrorism,

Kenyans generally show suspicion about the GWOT. He defends the case that the GWOT

has propagated the conviction that the Bush Administration holds multilateralism in

contempt and resorts to it only when it serves America's narrow interests.

African Oil: A Priority for US National Security and African Development is the

conclusion paper of a symposium organized by the African Oil Policy Initiative Group in

Washington, DC in January 2002 and attended by Walter Kansteiner III, US Under-Secretary of State for African affairs. The paper advocates a dramatic change in the United States' assessment of the strategic importance of Africa, given the vital importance of its energy resources for America's energy security. The report claims that American foreign policy experts have indulged for too long in the thinking that sub-Saharan Africa has no strategic value for the United States. In light of the deterioration of the security conditions in the Middle East, the report argues that West Africa offers a reliable alternative source of energy. It cites National Intelligence Council estimates indicating that American oil imports from Africa will reach 25% by 2015. Among recommendations pertaining to regional security and strategies aimed at securing this source of energy, the report calls for the United States Congress to declare the Gulf of Guinea an area of "vital interest" to the United States and the creation of a sub-regional command dedicated to that area on the model of the United States Forces Korea.

The United States Africa Command within the Framework of the Post-9/11 Africa Policy

US Africa Command: A New Strategic Paradigm by Sean McFate (Military Review, 2008) provides a comprehensive overview of AFRICOM by addressing its origins, objectives, design and timing. McFate first exposes the rationale behind the creation of AFRICOM by highlighting Africa's rising strategic value. He stresses the importance of Africa for the energy security of the United States and America's interest in addressing the threats posed by China's influence, international terrorism, chronic instability, state collapse, the rampant HIV/AIDS epidemic, transnational criminality, and narcotics trafficking. The article analyzes how this new strategic setting provoked an amendment of the UCP to ensure an improved focus, a better coordination, and unity of

command in employing defense resources at the service of American strategic interests on the continent. Then McFate proposes a new strategic paradigm to guarantee AFRICOM's success in securing Africa. His paradigm consists in considering security and development as tightly interconnected, as opposed to past development policies that, according to him, have so far attempted to bring economic prosperity while overlooking security issues. Consequently, he calls for the shift of the strategic military priority from combat to non-combat operations, in a preventive strategy that seeks to uproot the causes of instability by promoting economic development. In that regard, McFate emphasizes AFRICOM's potential to play a pioneering role for the next generation of geographic commands.

Africa Command: Forecast for the Future by Commander Otto Sieber (*Strategic Insights*, Volume VI, 2007) gives an interesting overview of the pros and cons of the debate that preceded the creation of AFRICOM. The article aims at addressing the two questions of whether Africa's strategic value justifies a dedicated geographic command and what design the command should adopt to both fulfill its purpose and avoid a perception of American imperialism by the Africans. While Sieber does address the first question, referring to Africa's importance for America's energy security and the fight against terrorism, he ends up overlooking the second one. However, the article conveys some elements of the criticism against AFRICOM within American academic circles. This criticism echoes part of the Africans' perception of the command, especially that the motivation behind the creation of the command is to control the flow of African oil. It also underlines concerns that the GWOT will fuel the terrorism that it is to combat and will increase the anti-America sentiment in Africa.

Africa Command: Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement or the Militarization of US-Africa Relations? (2007). This document is the transcript of a hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress. It is by far one of the most comprehensive documents on AFRICOM for it covers almost all the current questions related to the command, such as its objectives, its design and the role of other government agencies such as the Department of State and USAID. It also exposes an interesting panel of the perspectives of the different protagonists of the issue, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the United States Congress, and also the Africans.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the Committee, Representative Donald Payne, expressed his concerns about the Department of Defense assuming a leading role in foreign aid and foreign assistance, as well as the skepticism that the command is facing on the continent. In his testimony, Ambassador Stephen D. Mull, then Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs of the Department of State, took a pedagogic approach and summarized what AFRICOM is and what it is not. He stressed that AFRICOM would not compete with the Department of State, American embassies or USAID on the continent as the voice of the foreign policy of the United States. He also added that the command would not receive more prerogatives than the preexisting ones, would not deploy new military bases on the continent, and would have to coordinate with American diplomats and obtain chief of mission concurrence. Ambassador Mull further indicated that the civilian officials within the command will not exert any authority in the name of their parent agencies, but will report to the Commander of AFRICOM. Then he

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moved on to highlight the upcoming roles of AFRICOM, especially in ensuring a more

coherent focus of the Africa-America military relationship and a better support for the

Department of Defense programs such as the International Military Education and

Training (IMET), the Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and America's contribution to

the Global Peace Operations Initiative of the G8. Ambassador Mull also emphasized

AFRICOM's upcoming role in coordinating security assistance programs such as the

Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCI), the Gulf of Guinea Guard Initiative, the

East African Counterterrorism Initiative (EACI), as well as support to Security Sector

Reform (SSR) in Liberia and South Sudan and the United Nations Mission in Darfur.

Following Ambassador Mull, Theresa Whelan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of

Defense for African Affairs, put things back into perspective by indicating that security

cooperation represents only a portion of America's relationship with the continent. She

indicated that the United States spends $9 billion a year in Africa on health, development,

trade promotion, and good governance, while in contrast its annual security spending

only amount to $250 million. Stressing the innovative nature of AFRICOM, Whelan

underlined the interagency integration signified by the designation of a State Department

official as one of the two deputies to the Commander. This integrated design is expected

to bring to AFRICOM the expertise of the other Government agencies in the fields of

peace building, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. The DCMA will be

responsible, according to Whelan, for the coordination of all the security assistance,

including the support of AFRICOM to the development of the African Standby Force and

the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) program. On

finishing, Whelan addressed some "misconceptions" and "myths" about AFRICOM. She

denied, for instance, that the purpose of the command is to fight terrorism, secure oil supply, or counter the influence of China.

Following Whelan, Kurt Shillinger, Research Fellow in Security and Terrorism in Africa at the South African Institute of International Affairs, brought some African perspective to the debate. He argued that although AFRICOM is a "smart and overdue reform," it relied on contestable assumptions and unshared interests. He argued that the command is handicapped by its birth within a context of rising South-South economic and security cooperation, and "widespread and deeply felt antipathies about Washington's post 9/11 global posture." He claimed that African political leadership and public opinions hold strong objections against the GWOT and its manifestations in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as air strikes in Somalia. Shillinger also added that AFRICOM relied on an unfounded predicate, since the argument that instability in Africa represents a threat to American security interests has not been demonstrated. Somalia, he claimed, had not become an Afghanistan, as was announced. He stressed that the Africans' view of a Western control of the international security agenda, signified in their eyes by the prioritization of the war on terror, fueled frustration and sent a negative perception. Shillinger concluded by stating that AFRICOM's sure path to success, despite its initial trust deficit, is to pay more attention to the security needs of the continent and "keep strictly to the military lane."

Dr. Wafula Okumu, head of the African Security Analysis Programme at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa, added to the African perspective about the image of AFRICOM on the continent. He centered his intervention on the causes of the Africans' distrust for AFRICOM and made recommendations to eliminate

it. Among these causes, he cited the perception that AFRICOM might hamper the current trend towards the political integration of the continent, threaten the sovereignty of the African nations, militarize the Africa policy of the United States, and hinder the multilateral type of relationships that the continent favors in dealing with the rest of the world. Dr. Okumu also mentioned the resentment against a feeling of cultivated neglect and selective intervention as well as a lack of consultation before establishing AFRICOM. As ways to overcome this negative view, he recommended that AFRICOM open dialogue with the civil society, re-conceptualize itself to focus on conflict prevention and resolution in support of the African Standby Force, the African Union and other sub-regional organizations, and clarify its relationship with the African Union. Finally, he recommended, since the command suffers from the exterior perception that it prolongs the GWOT, the revision of the timing of AFRICOM, and its delay if necessary, until the resentment created by the war on terror subsides.

AFRICOM by J. Stephen Morrison, Director, Africa Program and Kathleen Hicks, Senior Fellow, International Security Program (CSIS 2007) salutes the creation of the command and the role it should play in improving America's strategic approach to Africa. However, the authors warn against the "hardened opposition" that the command may face on the ground. They argue that Defense officials have underestimated Africa's opinion climate and the impact of the independent media, political opposition and non-governmental groups. They also highlight the "hangover effect" of the war in Iraq and the disquiet caused by the counter-terror operations in Somalia. The article argues that, nevertheless, AFRICOM's initial errors are not terminal and that the command, a sound concept, should be able to correct them. In doing so, they propose that early concrete

contributions to Africa's security would be critical in diffusing the mistrust about the intentions of the command.

<div align="center">The Global War on Terror and Africa</div>

US Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia by Andrew Feickert (2005) reviews how American concerns that Africa may become a safe haven for terrorists have translated into military operations. This Congressional Research Service (CRS) report claims that growing terrorist activities have turned counterterrorism into the primary reason for the growing American military involvement in Africa. Feickert cites reports suggesting that 17 terrorist training centers, possibly related to Al Qaeda, have been identified in Kenya, and that this organization has set up recruiting bases in Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. In response to the terrorist threats on the continent, the United States established the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), the Gulf of Guinea Guard Initiative, and launched FLINTLOCK 2005. Headquartered in Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, the 2,000-troop CJTF-HOA has the responsibility to counter the terrorist threat in the total airspace and land areas out to the high-water mark of Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Yemen. Concurrently to CJTF-HOA, Combined Task Force 150, a multinational naval task force comprising ships from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Pakistan, New Zealand, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, monitors the eastern coast of the continent not only to fight suspect shipping and piracy but also to support OIF. Launched under the responsibility of EUCOM's Naval Forces Europe (USNAVEUR), the Gulf of Guinea Guard Initiative is a ten-year program whose objective is to assist ten West African nations in developing or

improving their maritime security. The program focuses on coastal security and puts emphasis on fighting piracy, drug and weapons smuggling, and illegal fishing. Finally, FLINTLOCK 2005 was a training exercise conducted by 700 personnel of the United States 10th Special Forces Group and the 20th Special Forces Group of the National Guard. Nearly 3,000 troops from Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia participated in the exercise whose ultimate objective was to assist in developing counterterrorism forces in a region that American security experts consider a potential breeding ground for terrorism.

AFRICOM's Dilemma: The Global War on Terrorism, Capacity Building, Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa by Robert G. Berschinski, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College (2007). Using two case studies, CJTF-HOA and OEF-TS, Berschinski argues that the kinetic military operations conducted on the continent under the GWOT have contributed to fuel feelings of mistrust and skepticism about the real objectives of the Africa policy of the United States and AFRICOM. He asserts that the African chapters were based on a wrong assessment of the threat, the result of a policy of aggregation, a term he borrows from David Kilcullen, the former Australian Army officer and current senior counterinsurgency adviser of the Multi-National Force-Iraq. This policy consisted, according to Berschinski, in amalgamating various isolated insurgencies in an artificially monolithic terrorist threat. He asserts that the *Algerian Groupe Salafiste Pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC) (Salafiste Group for Predication and Combat), now Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, represented a largely inflated threat and that the potential for the Sahel to become the base of the International Jihad was also exaggerated. He

defends the same argument as for the Horn of Africa and Somalia, asserting that studies

have demonstrated that ungoverned areas do not attract terrorists more than any other

groups. Berschinski begins his monograph by reviewing Africa's growing strategic value

in the eyes of the American policy makers, especially in view of securing America's

energy supply, combating terrorism, and countering the global influence of China. Then

he moves on to examine the place of AFRICOM in this new setting, emphasizing its

ambition to be a nontraditional geographic command. Addressing the core of his subject,

Berschinski then focuses on OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA. After reviewing the historical

evolution of the two operations, he insists on the fact that both operations represent

elements of "US hard power," despite involving civil-military and capacity building

operations. As such, they contradict the official stance of the Africa policy and raise

much concern in the African opinions. He argues that this concern was all the more

justified that these operations not only pursued security objectives that were diametrically

opposed to Africa's security concerns, but also aggravated the transnational terrorist

threats they were to curtail. By pursuing a "hard power" strategy that is in contradiction

with AFRICOM's stated design these operations have created significant hurdles for the

nascent command.

  Removing Terrorist Sanctuaries: The 9/11 Commission Recommendations and US

Policy by Francis T. Miko, Coordinator Specialist in International Relations for the

Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of the CRS (2005). In its July 2004 final

report, one of the recommendations of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks

Upon the United States was to "identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist

sanctuaries." Among these sanctuaries, the report identified six primary areas in

particular, including the Horn of Africa. In this report, Miko gives an overview on

international terrorism and Africa in general, as well as a closer examination of the local

situations in Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, the Sahel region, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the

western littoral of the continent. Miko's assessment is that international terrorist

organizations continue to use the continent as a safe-haven, a staging area or a transit

point in operations aimed against American interests. He argues that the Sahel Region

and the Horn of Africa have become more and more vulnerable to terrorism, even citing

the potential for terrorism-related trafficking of nuclear materials that allow the

fabrication of dirty bombs. According to his assessment, the presence of Al Qaeda and

affiliated groups has significantly increased not only in Somalia and Kenya, but also in

West Africa, although he recognizes that these claims are contested.

As regards Somalia, Miko stresses the absence of a central government as the

primary vulnerability to terrorist infiltrations. He highlights measures taken by the Bush

Administration against Somali organizations with ties with Al Qaeda, such as *Al-Ittihad*,

as well as operations conducted by CJTF-HOA and the Ethiopian armed forces.

According to Miko, Kenya is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa with a known

presence of Al Qaeda. He bases this statement on the terrorist attacks against the

American embassy in 1998, the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa in 2002, and the attempted

shoulder-fired missile attack against an Israeli plane taking off from Mombasa Airport

that same day.

In the Sahel Region, Miko's report focuses on the GSPC and the raid conducted

by its leader Amri Saifi, aka *El Para*, throughout the region following the abduction of 32

European tourists. Despite asserting the potential for Nigeria to become a terrorist safe-

haven, due to its large Muslim population and the presence of fundamentalist Salafist-oriented groups, the report argues that this possibility has not materialized. However, Miko emphasizes Bin Laden's alleged intentions to target the country's oil production and turn its Muslim population into a base for political support and recruitment.

In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the report indicates the presence of Al Qaeda operatives seeking to buy diamonds in order to finance terrorist activities. These operations have allegedly been facilitated by connections within the previous government of Charles Taylor in Liberia and the Revolutionary United Front of Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone. Miko also argues that the West Africa Lebanese diaspora, according to observers of West Africa and some American officials, contributes to the financing of Hezbollah.

National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, White House (2006). This document intends to set the course for an effective strategy against international terrorism. It identifies the strategic necessity of destroying the global terrorist network and confronting the ideology that sustains it. In the short-term, the document advocates, among other objectives, to kill or capture the terrorists, deny them potential safe-havens, and cut their sources of support. The long-term strategy relies on winning the battle of ideas and countering the expansion of the jihadist ideology. With regard to the GWOT in Africa, the most important aspect of this document is the emphasis it puts on denying safe-havens to terrorist organizations, which has led to the deployment of CJTF-HOA and OEF-TS.

The United States and Africa: Shifting Geopolitics in an "Age of Terror" by Brennan M. Kraxberger (Africa Today, 2005) gives an overview of American foreign

policy experts' assessment of Africa before and after the September 11 attacks. Kraxberger uses the concept of "geopolitical code," the way countries arrange places and entities in a hierarchy of significance, to measure the evolution of Africa's importance in the eyes of American policymakers. He also exposes how this assessment has affected the Africa policy of the United States. His overall conclusion is that while the Cold War was a period of relative disinterest, and the 1990s a decade of further disengagement, the September 11 terrorist attacks have provoked a radical shift in the assessment of Africa. From then on, the nexus between failed or failing states and global terrorism has become the primary concern of American foreign policy elites. With the experience in Afghanistan being the reference point, this dominant assessment has led these elites to advocating a strategy of nation-building and military decentralization to cope with the continent's ungoverned areas and large Muslim population offering a potential breeding ground for transnational Islamic miliantism. Military decentralization implies a redistribution of America's military resources in view of transferring more weight from Europe and East Asia to Africa. Finally, Kraxberger reviews the tensions and contradictions within the new American geopolitical code for Africa. Among them, he cites the competition between the geopolitics of energy resources and the grand narrative of the GWOT, the limiting effect of American domestic political considerations, tensions over sovereignty, diverging interpretations of terrorism, and the "Somalia Syndrome" that virtually outlaws increased American military interventionism in Africa.

Reorienting the GWOT to Win the Moral Level of War by Major David M. Reardon, United States Army (School of Advanced Military Studies, 2006) argues that because of it being emblematic of a new generation of warfare in which the physical

destruction of the adversary is a secondary concern, the GWOT will not be won on the battlefield. After reviewing the strategic and operational characteristics of the Fourth Generation of Warfare that he considers as the framework of the GWOT, Reardon highlights the counterproductive effect of kinetic operations in these asymmetric confrontations. He claims that "in Fourth Generation War what wins at the physical level tends to lead to defeat at the moral level of war," and calls for the reorientation of the GWOT. This reorientation, according to Reardon, will send a strong positive message to the global community and reconnect the United States to centers of order while distancing it from centers of disorder.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

<u>Caveats:</u>

Analyzing the African continent's interactions with the world usually leads to confronting two major pitfalls. The primary one is the difficulty of drawing general conclusions for nations that, even of the same sub-region, do not present a monochromic façade, but rather a significant diversity concerning their strategic interests and foreign policy positions. Africa counts 53 nations and nearly a billion people. There are probably more common features between the United States and Croatia than Senegal and Ethiopia. Another difficulty is to isolate the anti-neocolonialism factor and set it aside, as this thesis intends to do, since it is a known and enduring factor. Moreover, it has the tendency to overshadow other factors with which it is often closely entwined. However, anti-neocolonialism should not be underestimated, as non-Africans often tend to do, for it is probably one of the most powerful driving factors of the Africans' conscious and unconscious representations of the international system. To a large extent, AFRICOM is most likely facing the Africans' hypersensitivity to anything that bears even the slightest appearance of neo-colonialism.

Less than fifty years ago, the majority of the African nations were still fighting to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonial domination. For some of them, who wrested their freedom at the cost of liberation wars against their European masters, the reminiscence is even more vivid. Moreover, many current African political leaders have started their political careers in the framework of the struggle against colonialism that took place from the thirties through the sixties. The reality is that many leaders of the

African nations' struggle against colonialism, and the authoritarian regimes that often superseded the European conquerors, remember that the United States was more than often in favor of the status quo, in the name of containing the propagation of the communist influence. The case of South Africa is typical in this regard. It is safe to postulate that the United States' uneven relations with the leaders of the post-Apartheid South Africa are largely the result of the South Africans' reminiscence of America's support to the white supremacist regime and its hostile position against the so-called "terrorist" and "communist" African National Congress (ANC). The Nixon Administration's 1969 National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM 39), an unambiguous expression of sympathy for the Apartheid regime, and the several instances in which the United States used its veto to block United Nations sanctions against Pretoria, are certainly not forgotten.[1] One should expect that the political mindsets of the current African leaders still bear the marks of these bitter experiences.

As mentioned in the preamble to the literature review, this study has been significantly challenged by the fact that it addresses a subject that is in current and rapid evolution and which has resulted in only a limited amount of publications, primarily in the form of foreign policy journal articles. Accordingly, the amount of data concerning the specific aspects that this study would like to analyze is very limited.

<u>Research Method and Hypothesis:</u>

This study relies on a qualitative analysis methodology and consists in a case study centered on West Africa. The hypothesis that it seeks to validate is that there is a causal relationship between AFRICOM's chilly reception on the continent and the following factors:

-    The growing financial and diplomatic influence of China;

-    The push-back effect of the War on Terror;

-    The African leaders' lack of interest in AFRICOM's security concept;

-    And the Africans' increasing preference for multilateral over bilateral approaches to their security problems.

Delimitation:

This study uses two overlapping references to define West Africa in terms of geographic, geostrategic, and political delimitations. The first reference is the United Nations' geoscheme, a classification developed by the Statistics Division of the institution and which divides the world into macro-geographical regions (continents) and geographical sub-regions.[2] This reference is completed, from a political standpoint, by the boundaries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). As a result, the countries covered by the scope of this study are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Main Steps:

The case study will comprise five steps detailed as follows:

Step 1: Analysis of the influence of China

This initial step will try to determine to what extent China's reinforcing presence in the sub-region has the potential of undermining the diplomatic posture of the United States in West Africa and how that influence affects negatively Washington's attempts to expand its engagement in the sub-region. To assess the influence of China in the sub-

region and its impact on the United States' Africa policy, this study will adopt the following approach:

- First, assess the significance of China's engagement, especially in terms of trade and financial initiatives;
- Analyze China's Africa strategy and identify its characteristics that render it effective in expanding Beijing's influence;
- And assess, using survey data, the impact of that strategy on local opinions and political leaders.

Step 2: Analysis of the push-back effect of the War on Terror

The WOT has been presented by some observers as the main factor of a regression in the United States' international standing and influence. The purpose of this part of the study is to assess the WOT's negative impact on AFRICOM's perception in the sub-region.

- The initial step will illustrate the weakening support for the WOT's strategy in the sub-region, using survey data and press references, and then to expose how the WOT fails to provide a common security purpose between AFRICOM and the African nations.
- The subsequent step, still using survey data, will aim to expose how the WOT, in both its global and local dimensions, has a tendency of crystallizing religious frustrations and divides, especially among Muslim populations.
- The final step will demonstrate, using data on terrorist incidents in the sub-region, that the threat has been largely overstated and that the anti-terror pretext has been used by some regimes to crack down on legitimate dissent and restrict civil liberties.

Step 3: Analysis of the weaknesses of AFRICOM's security concept

Quite paradoxically, AFRICOM's main weakness might have come from its eagerness to soften its military aspect. Three main reasons might have motivated that tendency. First, the American political context, with two ongoing wars, has certainly exerted a pressure against overt military expansionism. Second, charges against DoD encroachments on DoS prerogatives might have led to an increased emphasis on the civil dimension of the command. Finally, the will to calm fears of a possible militarization of the United States' Africa policy has certainly been influential. The unfortunate consequences of AFRICOM's conflicting natures are threefold:

- The lack of an overarching strategic framework that would have provided a clear and consistent guidance;
- A security concept that is shallow and fails to convince the African nations that it can assist in addressing their security issues;
- Confusing and conflicting communications that have contributed to fanning the skepticism and distrust of the African nations.

Step 4: Analysis of the impact of the institutional background

As already mentioned, the existence of intergovernmental bodies that have the preference of the nations of the sub-region in addressing their security issues may constitute one of the main challenges for AFRICOM. The African nations, in general, have already largely marked their confidence in the combined efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, as signified by the recent developments in Sudan with the deployment of the United Nations/African Union hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

To assess the role played by that institutional background in AFRICOM's initial

difficulties, this study will:

- Assess the progress made with regard to collective security
  mechanisms at the continental and sub-regional levels; and
- Demonstrate, through survey data, that these institutions have the

  preference of the West Africans in addressing their specific problems.

The conclusions of the case study will be summarized in the final chapter of this

thesis, accompanied with specific recommendations on how they could help in

developing better adjusted lines of effort for the entry strategy and communication plan

of AFRICOM.

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[1] Lemelle, Sidney, and D. G. Robin Kelly. *Class, Culture, and Nationalism in the African Diaspora.* London: Verso, 1994. 261.

[2] "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings." *United Nations Statistics Division.* January 31, 2008. http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm (accessed May 22, 2008).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

1 - China's Increasing Influence in West Africa

The initial question that this study wishes to examine is whether China's historic

expansive engagement in West Africa is playing, directly or indirectly, against the

emboldened American Africa policy that AFRICOM is to spearhead. In order to answer

this question, this study will first assess the significance of the increasing trend in China's

presence in West Africa, then analyze Beijing's motivations and the main lines of its

approach to the continent, and finally examine the impact of that influence on local

opinions.

China's exponential economic growth has been one of the most notable aspects of

the first decade of this century. Since 1978 and the economic reforms implemented by

Deng Xiaoping, the country's influence in the international system has been increasing

rapidly. Perhaps because of its vast resources, central continental position, and large

population, Beijing's rise to global power status has been advancing primarily the

economic line of effort, while keeping a relatively low profile in the other areas of

national power, such as the diplomatic and military ones. Apart from some specific cases

that it has designated as vital to its interests, such as Taiwan for its immediate security

and Sudan for its oil supply, China has been assuming, so far, a more and more

conformist and legalist posture in the international stage. Not simply out of virtue, of

course, this attitude probably proceeds from a "highly calculative" strategy and a deeply

pragmatic approach that seeks asymmetric gains in an international environment

dominated by the United States.[1] Consequently, China has been striving, in what some

observers name an "acculturation to the international order," to normalize its

relationships with the rest of the world and polish its image, in part by joining several

international treaties such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).[2] In the same logic,

Beijing facilitated the initiation of a negotiated solution to the problem of the North

Korean nuclear program. This low-key strategy has received a host of interpretations.

Some insist on Beijing's dependence on the stability of the international environment in

order to extend its trade reach and maintain its economic growth. According to this

school of thought, even the nationalist narrative about Taiwan is merely vocal and

Beijing is careful not to disrupt the intense trade relationship with Taipei and not escalate

the situation and generate instability in its immediate proximity. The 12 April 2008

historic meeting between China's President Hu Jintao and Taiwan's Vice-president

Vincent Siew is largely interpreted as the sign that even with Taiwan, Beijing is moving

towards normalization.[3] This theory also implies that China executes its grand strategy

with a long-term focus segmented in phases and that, for the time being, the

modernization and economic development of the country are the overriding priorities.

The ensuing phase's objective might then be a military buildup, benefiting from the

country's consolidated economic base. This leads to China's apparent avoidance of a

direct confrontation with the United States, at least until it has consolidated its global

economic preeminence.

Others argue that China does not actually seek to undermine the United States'

stance, but rather seeks to promote a Sino-US condominium, since an openly multipolar

system would act against Beijing's interests by favoring the rise of three competitors

(India, Japan, and Russia) in its immediate neighborhood.[4] Finally, others invoke

cultural factors, such as the Confucian ideal of victory by mastering the rules of the game, or Sun Tzu's ideal of winning without fighting.

11 - Assessing China's Fast Increasing Engagement in West Africa

In West Africa, China's strategic offensive follows the same pattern of economic primacy and nests evenly under the asymmetric weak-strong strategy with which Beijing faces the United States on the global stage.[5] The primary step in assessing the significance of China's economic offensive towards the sub-region is to analyze its volumes and, especially to identify its trends. Although Beijing's economic expansion in Africa occurs in the general framework of the dramatic new trend in South-South economic relations, this trend is probably nowhere as evident as in the Sino-African trade and investment flows. China and Africa have a very long history of trade that goes back, at least, to the Silk Road period. China also was among the first investors in the sector of infrastructure in post-colonial Africa.[6] However, the current scale and pace in their investment and trade relations is unprecedented, largely because of economic complementaries between the two. China has an essential need for Africa's extractive resources, mainly oil and metallic ores (85%), while Africa has a growing demand for China's finance, manufactured goods, and machinery.[7] In addition, China is more and more interested in labor-intensive raw products (cotton, timber). Exports from Africa to Asia, which are overwhelmingly dominated by China, increased by 15% in 1990-1995 and by 20% in 2000-2005, with a 40% annual growth rate in the latter period. Africa's imports from China quadrupled in the same period.[8] There is of course a significant imbalance in this relationship, since African exports represent only 1.6% of Asia's global imports. However, the fact remains that Asia has become a major trading partner for

Africa, accounting for 27% of Africa's exports in 2006, against 14% in 2000.[9] It has

almost equaled the shares of the European Union (EU) (32%) and the United States'

(29%), the traditional trade partners of the continent. Moreover, its current trend indicates

that it is likely to increase further and rapidly, catching up with the EU and the United

States by 2010.[10] From the African perspective, these volumes are obviously important.

Concerning China specifically, the growth rate in Africa's annual exports represents 1.7

times its global growth, making China its most dynamic partner.

Additionally, China's resource-driven interest in the African market has led to a

dramatic policy of liberalization, seeking to facilitate the flow of African goods, and

multilateral and bilateral agreements establishing economic free zones and economic

cooperation forums such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). In the

model of the AGOA and the EU's Everything But Arms (EBA) programs, Beijing has

negotiated preferential arrangements, regrouped under the Special Preferential Tariffs

Treatment (SPTT), and has enacted unilateral tariffs suppressions on 190 commodities

from 25 African nations.[11] It is also interesting to note that exports of goods produced in

Africa by Chinese firms benefit from programs such as AGOA and EBA, which

facilitates their penetration of the Western markets and encourages Chinese entrepreneurs

to settle in the continent. Additionally, Chinese businesses are strongly attracted into

West Africa by the lack of internationally recognized technical standards and, most of all,

by the poor enforcement of security and labor protection regulations.

The charts below (figures 2 and 3) illustrate the exponential growth in the China-

West Africa commercial exchanges. From an almost insignificant level, these exchanges

are literally exploding.

Figure 2.   Chinese imports from West Africa in millions of dollars in 1995 and 2007.

Data Source: Global Trade Atlas, May 2008
http://www.gtis.com/product.cfm?level=1&type=W.

The overwhelming share of the oil producers of the sub-region - Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Mauritania - is flagrant amongst Chinese imports, as visible in the chart above.
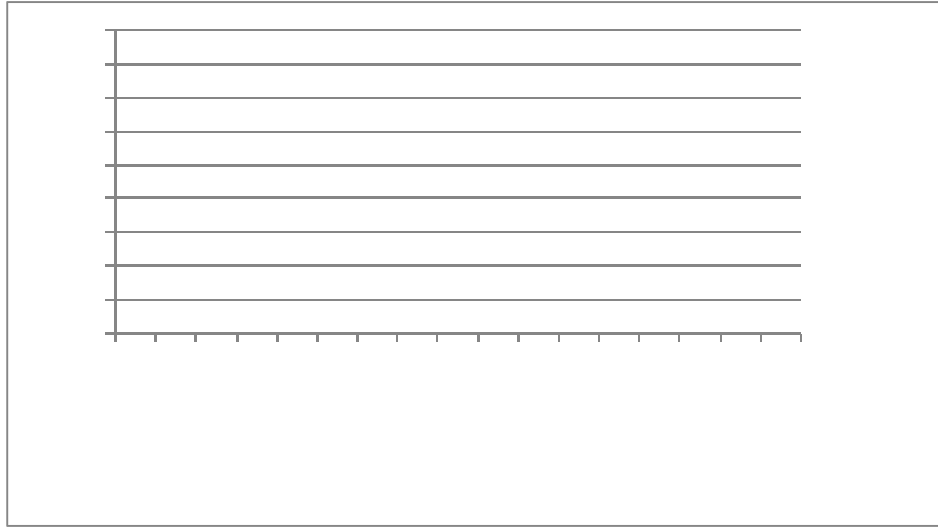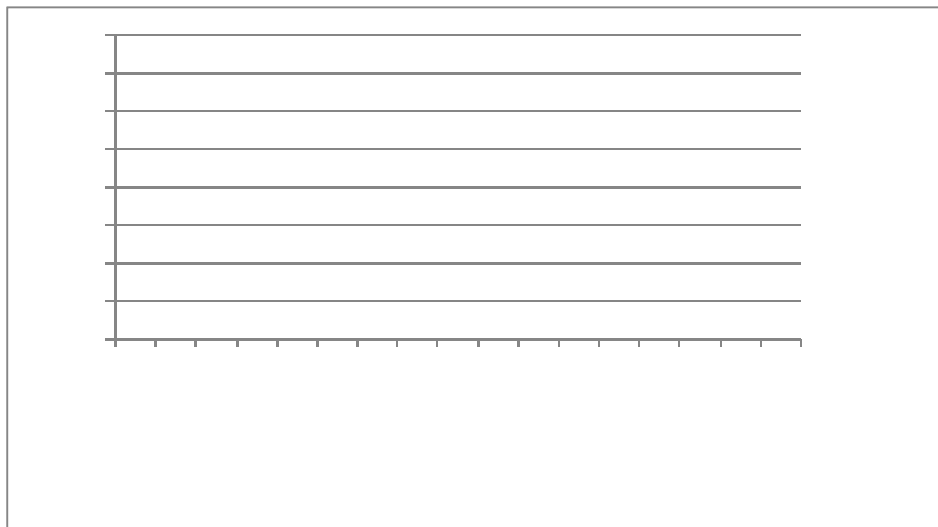

Figure 3.   Chinese exports to West Africa in millions of dollars in 1995 and 2007.
Data Source: Global Trade Atlas, May 2008. http://www.gtis.com/product.cfm?level=1&type=W.

The charts above (figures 2 and 3) also highlight the imbalance in these

exchanges, Chinese exports to West Africa being greatly superior in value.

The financial aspect of Sino-African relations is even more telling. What is

noteworthy is not so much the amounts of money, although they are very important for

the poor African nations, but the apparent facility with which they are provided, as well

as Beijing's total lack of interest in their use. With the levels of public corruption in the

continent, this is an almost irresistible incentive. In May 2007, Beijing announced the

commitment of $20 billion in infrastructure development for Africa over the next three

years.[12] This is just the latest example of a seemingly endless suite of lavish loans and

debt suppressions. However, unlike most other donors, such as the United States, that

commonly offer grants, Beijing prefers loans. Those loans are usually forgiven to nations

that welcome closer political ties with Beijing and give it a preferential economic

treatment.[13] This is apparently a clear indication of the political exploitation of China's

apparent extravagance. Another aspect of China's financial engagement in West Africa is

that it targets sectors and countries that the World Bank and the donor-countries seem to

have forgotten for decades, which amplifies the impact of Beijing's aid in local opinions

and seeks to give an image of benevolence. Infrastructure is an example of that selective

targeting. Much of the infrastructure left by the European colonizers in West Africa is in

decay, since international donors, especially in the period of structural adjustment

policies (SAP) of the 1980s, refused to fund their maintenance or further development.

China invests massively in that sector, in part because Chinese firms build infrastructure

for 25% of the cost of Western firms.[14] Similarly, China has the capacity to push state

controlled corporations to invest in politically risky countries, such as Liberia and Sierra

Leone. In doing so, Beijing's objective is to alleviate the predatory appearance of its engagement and convince its African partners that beyond oil and trade profit, it is actually concerned about their development.[15]

Nigeria is by far the foremost attractor of Chinese investments in the sub-region, due of course, to its oil resources. In April 2008, Beijing offered Abuja $50 billion in insurance coverage to support investments in the oil sector. The comment of the Nigerian Minister of Finance, Shamsuddeen Usman, is telling about the impact of this strategy of massive financing:

> The possibilities are endless. Which other country has made that kind of money available? Has the UK or America or any one of them? For me this is a sign of real commitment by China.[16]

Since 2006, Beijing has multiplied similar incentives to woo West Africa's major market, with its 130 million population, and its leading oil producer. The same year, Beijing and Abuja signed an $8 billion dollars agreement to build 1,300 kilometers of railway in Nigeria.[17] Similar examples are almost endless. The inauguration in 2006 of the first direct flight between Africa and China, which links Beijing to Abuja, via Dubai, by the South China Airlines Company (SCAC), is perhaps the symbol of the importance of Nigeria for the strategic interests of China.[18] In May 2007, China launched the first Nigerian communication satellite, a satellite that Beijing actually built and financed, together with another one for Venezuela, another major oil producer.[19] The following bilateral agreements further illustrate China's expanding engagement in West Africa over the last decade:

- In 2001, Beijing donated $1 million worth of equipment to the Nigerian army. In 2005, Beijing granted another $2 million in military equipment and deployed 21 on-site instructors to train the Nigerian forces.[20]

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- The same year, the Nigeria Akwa Ibom State and the Chinese government concluded an agreement for the construction of a refinery and a power plant for $1 billion.[21]

- In 2003, Chinese agricultural experts arrived in the Nigerian state of Kanu, as part of a 500-person team operating under a four-year technical assistance program conducted in association with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).[22]

- In June 2004, the Nigerian Defense Minister, Rabiu Kwankwaso, paid a visit to Beijing during which the two countries agreed to strengthen their military ties. The agreement included the revitalization of Nigeria manufacturing of military equipment, through the Defense Industry Corporation of Nigeria (DICON), the delivery of Chinese military equipment, mostly fighter jets, and increased admissions of of Nigerian military students in Chinese academies.[23]

- In October 2005, China signed a free agreement with Nigeria covering the drilling of 598 boreholes in Abuja and eighteen other states to improve the supply of drinkable water.[24]

- In 2005, Nigeria purchased F-8IIM (FINBACK) fighter jets from Aviation Industries of China I (AVIC I) and *Chengdu* F/FT-7NI jets together with air-to-air missiles and unguided rockets from China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Cooperation (CATIC).[25] These deals further signified Abuja's shift to Beijing for its weapon supplies.[26]

- In 2006, the Guoji Group, based in central China's Henan Province, set up an economic cooperation zone in Sierra Leone, which allegedly attracted twenty Chinese small and middle-sized companies.[27]

- In 2006, China extended the Approved Destination Status (ADS) to 26 additional African nations, including Cape Verde, Mali, Benin, and Nigeria.[28]

- In 2006, a Chinese firm and southern Nigeria's Imo State signed an agreement for the establishment of an Economic Processing Zone (EPZ).[29]

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- In 2007, China and Senegal signed an agreement for the deployment of Chinese medical teams in Senegalese hospitals.[30]
- In 2008, Beijing announced its commitment to expand its trade exchange with the continent to $100 billion by 2010, more than doubling its 2005 level of $39.7 billion.[31]
- In April 2008, the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, Ebnezer Begyina Sekyi-Hughes, and his Chinese counterpart, Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), met in Beijing to "strengthen parliamentary cooperation between their two institutions."[32]

Though Nigeria is the focal point of China's attention, it has also stepped up its diplomatic engagement with the other countries of the sub-region:[33]

- Benin:
  - The Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong visited Benin in 2004 and President Yayi Boni visited Beijing in 2006.
  - The bilateral trade between the two countries reached $1.09 billion in 2005.
- Equatorial Guinea:
  - President Obiang Nguema visited Beijing twice, in 2001 and 2005.
  - In 2002, Xu Jialu, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, visited Malabo.
  - The bilateral trade between Malabo and Beijing reached $1.457 billion in 2005.
- Ghana:
  - President John Kufuor visited Beijing in 2002 and the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Accra in 2006.
  - The bilateral trade was about $769 million in 2005.
- Mali:
  - President Toumani Touré visited China in 2004 and Gu Xiulian,

vice-chairwoman of the Standing Committee of the National

People's Congress visited Bamako the same year.

o Bilateral trade: $145 million.

Beyond these bilateral relations, the most significant characteristic of Beijing's

increasing presence in West Africa, and which further emphasizes China's interest in the

continent in general, is probably that Beijing is striving to formalize and consolidate its

relationships within multilateral frameworks, such as the FOCAC.[34]

12 - Analyzing the Objectives and Strategy of China's West African Agenda

Obviously, the supply of hydrocarbon represents the primary, although not the

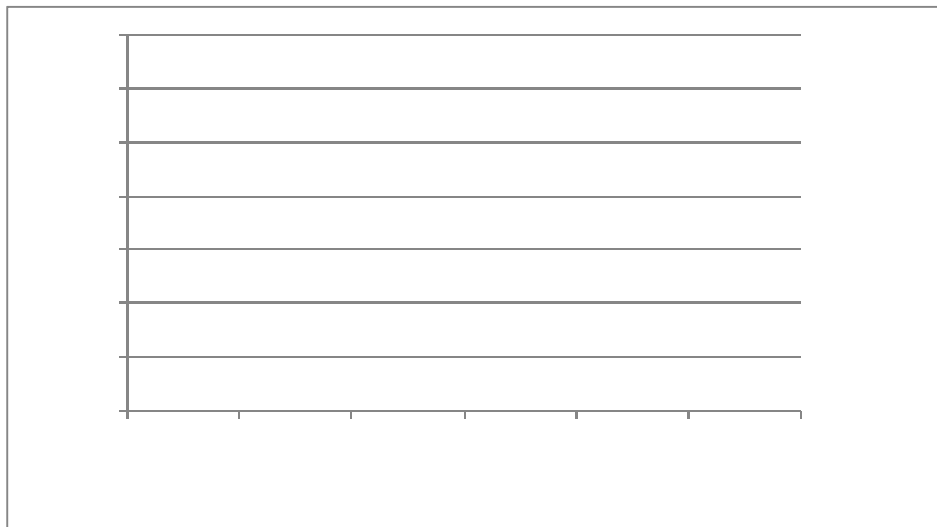exclusive, motivation of the Chinese expansion in West Africa.

Figure 4. Chinese imports from West Africa in 1995 and 2007.
Data Source: Global Trade Atlas, May 2008..
http://www.gtis.com/product.cfm?level=1&type=W.

Isolating Taiwan used to be the driving factor of Beijing's Africa policy, but it has lost its preeminence. The fact is that an overwhelming majority of African nations, forty-seven out of fifty-three, including all the nations of West Africa, have adopted a one-China policy.[35] Senegal was among the latest to recognize Beijing in 2005, despite decades of close ties with Taipei.[36] Thanks to a checkbook backed by a trillion dollars in currency reserves, Beijing has largely attained the objective of isolating Taiwan in the African continent, and in its western sub-region in particular. In addition, and as previously stated, Africa is one of the theaters of China's strategy of "peaceful rise" to global power, in an effort of securing amicable relations with key regions and counterbalancing a perceived hostility of the international system towards Beijing. One needs to bear in mind that a fundamental aspect of China's perception of the international system, especially with the United States as a sole super power, is that it is overwhelmingly hostile to its interests.[37] Almost alone, Africa does not display a fundamental hostility to China. Europe appears to be already saturated, with the slowly emerging rivalry between the United States and the European Union, and the bitter duel between the United States and Russia over influence on the former Central European satellites of the Soviet Union. Open expansion into Latin America would be a direct aggression against the United States and would be in contradiction with the imperative of non-direct confrontation with Washington. Asia is probably the most hostile region, in which neighboring nations perceive the rise of China as a direct threat to their security. Expansion into Africa might therefore help Beijing loosen the tourniquet and break its perceived strategic encirclement. Moreover, in the prospect of the reform of the United Nations Security Council, and the possible accession of Japan or India to the status of

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permanent members, the votes of the African nations, one third of the membership of the institution, could prove crucial in preventing the isolation of Beijing.

However, above all, and in line with Beijing's pragmatism, hard national interests drive China's unprecedented engagement in Africa. In this regard, oil and gas represent the foremost motivation of China's engagement in the continent, in general, and in West Africa in particular. Hydrocarbons represented 62% of Africa's exports to China in 2006, followed by non-petroleum minerals.[38] In Nigeria, and the Gulf of Guinea in general, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation. (CNOOC) and the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) are in charge of securing oil deals. As usual with China's trade agreements in the continent, those deals are facilitated by simultaneous loans granted by state controlled banks such as the Export and Import Bank of China (EXIMBANK) and the China Development Bank (CDB). In 2006, for instance, CNOOC received an exploitation license on four major oil blocks off the coast of Nigeria, concurrently with a $2.5 billion loan offered by EXIMBANK. Almost simultaneously, CNPC secured another deal covering four blocks, together with a $2 billion investment in the Kaduna refinery in northern Nigeria.[39]

In terms of approach, China's African strategy has grown increasingly sophisticated, as opposed to the flatly anti-Taiwan, third-world, and anti-Western stance that it used to present. However, China still taps largely into the third-world narrative and portrays itself as the spokesperson of the developing countries and the advocate of more just economic relationships between nations, a message that resonates powerfully among the African elite. In addition, Beijing carefully distances itself from the traditional neocolonialist model, at least verbally. The Chinese government issued in January 2006

the White Paper on China's Africa Policy in which it calls itself "the largest developing country", recalls the African continent's struggle against colonialism and apartheid, praises the role of the African Union, and insists heavily on "political equality and mutual trust."[40]

On engaging Africa, the Chinese leadership makes key assumptions that shape its strategy. First, they consider that China has a clear advantage over the West due to its history, especially its humiliations at the hands of the Western powers and its experience of colonialism, as well as its formidable redemption, though still largely incomplete, from underdevelopment to international preeminence. The Chinese believe that this experience has a powerful resonance among the African elite who resent their current conditions.[41] In addition, the Chinese believe that they already have the foundations of a durable strategic partnership, foundations that have been established since the 1950s by a relationship of political assistance, solidarity, and respect. Their intention is to bank on China's support, during the Cold War, to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, to the sovereignty of the African nations, and the denunciation of neocolonialism. Beijing also remembers that the backing of the African nations was instrumental for its accession to international recognition and its entry into the UNSC in the 1970s.[42]

The Chinese White Paper specifies the general principles and objectives of China's Africa policy in the following terms:

> - "Sincerity, friendship and equality. China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respects African countries' independent choice of the road of development and supports African countries' efforts to grow stronger through unity.
>
> - Mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity. China

supports African countries' endeavor for economic development and nation building, carries out cooperation in various forms in the economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity of China and Africa.

- Mutual support and close coordination. China will strengthen cooperation with Africa in the UN and other multilateral systems by supporting each other's just demand and reasonable propositions and continue to appeal to the international community to give more attention to questions concerning peace and development in Africa.

- Learning from each other and seeking common development. China and Africa will learn from and draw upon each other's experience in governance and development, strengthen exchange and cooperation in education, science, culture and health. Supporting African countries' efforts to enhance capacity building, China will work together with Africa in the exploration of the road of sustainable development."[43]

The document adroitly insists that:

The one China principle is the political foundation for the establishment and development of China's relations with African countries and regional organizations.[44]

Purposefully, the discourse from Beijing aims at marking itself out through "punctilious observance of the principle of non-interference, rejection of any notion of Western moral legitimacy, and on putting forward the idea of the specificity of values, in contrast with Western universalism."[45] Beijing strives to pose as a peer, not a mentor. The reference to multilateralism, through the mention of the United Nations and the African regional organizations, and the insistence on state-to-state relations, which excludes civil societies and other NGOs abhorred by most of the governments in the

continent, denote a deep understanding of African political psychology and a great sense of strategic opportunism.

In summary, the Chinese strategic communication plan for West Africa advances three main lines that are *equality*, *mutual benefit*, and *mutual respect*. The Chinese Special Representative on African Affairs, Liu Guijin, developed for a United Nations' meeting on China-Africa relations what he calls the three outstanding characteristics of Beijing's Africa policy:

> One is equality. China views African countries, big or small, as equal partners. We never try to impose our ideas, our ideologies and our social systems on African countries.

> Another distinguished characteristic is mutual benefit. When we have economic dealings, and when we have projects, we will respect the choice of the African people and the African governments. We don't serve our own interest. We serve the interests of the African governments and the Chinese government, the African people and the Chinese people.

> The third is mutual respect. With regard to African issues, the Chinese government respects the opinion of relevant African countries, of the neighboring countries and of regional organizations.[46]

> These lines reinforce the indication that China has purposefully adopted *political*

warfare as its primary instrument of grand strategy in Africa.[47]

13 - The Impact of China's Influence on Local Opinions

How does China's strategy translate in terms of perception in West Africa? How does it compare with the influence of the United States? A recent global survey of public opinions by The Pew Global Attitudes Project indicates that China's African policy is having an increasing impact in the continent (figure 5):

> In Africa, China's influence is already about as noticeable as America's, and is increasing at a much more perceptible pace than is America's.[48]

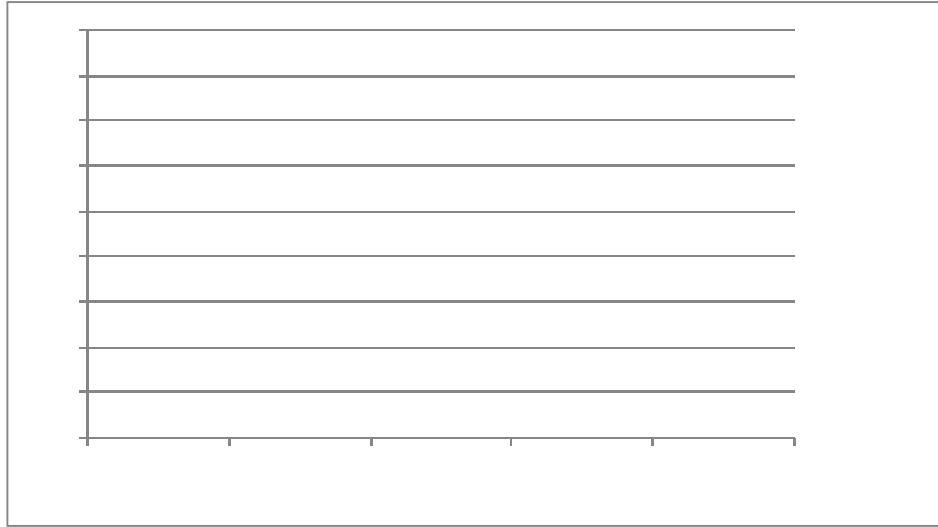Figure 5.   Opinions on the perceived significance of China and US influences.
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major
World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

In terms of erosion as well, the Pew study indicates that the West Africans

perceive the influences of the United States as decreasing more significantly than China's
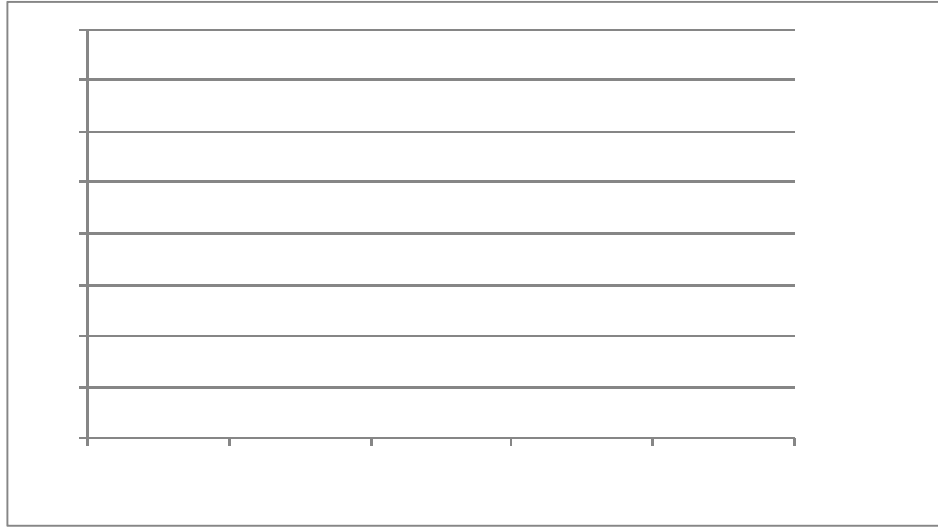
(figure 6).

Figure 6.   Opinions on the perceived decrease in the influences of the US and China.
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major
World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

The most remarkable indication of the Pew study is perhaps a rapid pace in the

improvement of Beijing's image. In Nigeria for instance, the percentage of favorable

opinion bounced from 59% in 2006 to 75% in 2008. Although the same study shows

positive opinions about the United States in the sub-region, in sharp contrast with the rest

of the world, "there are significant gaps in a number of countries", such as Senegal and

Mali, in which China's approval rates are significantly superior to the United States'.[49]

The Pew study concludes that figure 7):

> Across sub-Saharan Africa, China's influence is seen as growing faster than
> America's, and China is almost universally viewed as having a more beneficial
> impact on African countries than does the United States.[50]

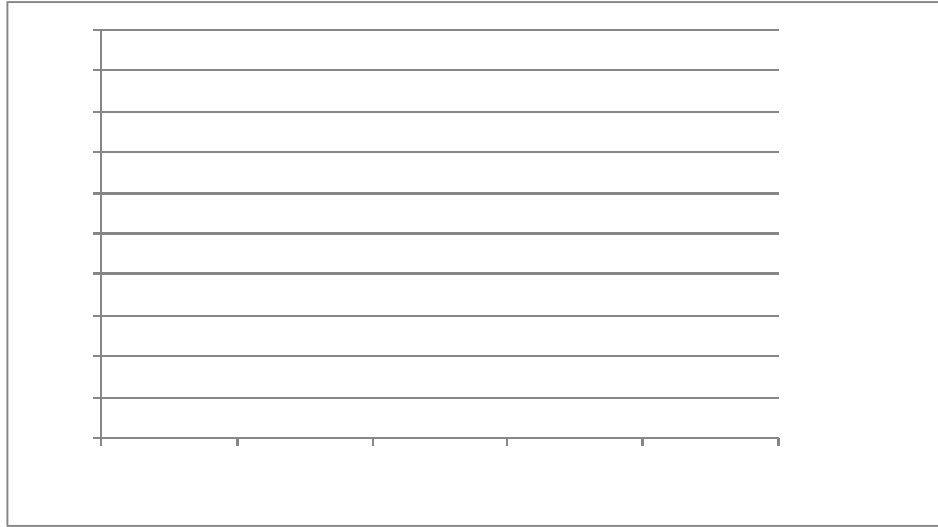Figure 7.   Compared favorable opinions on the United States and China.
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major
World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

The comparison of global approval rates about China's rise and its effects on the

nations of the world is even more telling, particularly in the case of West Africa (figure

8).
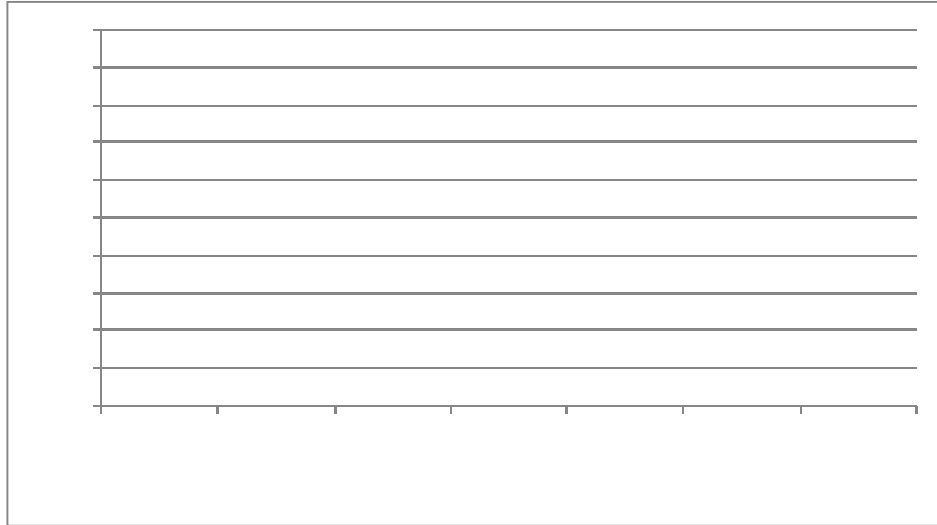
Figure 8.   World favorable opinions on how China's growing economy may affect their countries.
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

Although the Pew surveys do point out that public opinions in West Africa, as does the African continent in general, remain appreciative of the United States, there is a patent indication here that China's influence has not only increased in the sub-region, but it is more and more judged positively. As already mentioned, China's fast economic growth, huge market, insatiable appetite for energy, and low risk-aversion profile represent a huge appeal for the West African nations. At the 2006 FOCAC, which he attend together with 40 African heads of states, the Ghanaian President John Kufuor expressed the sub-region leaders' interest in the economic opportunity that China represent for them:

> We want Chinese people not only come to (Africa to) trade, but also bring know-how technology, as well as capital, to share with us on the win-win base. […] We will talk openly and frankly to each other, with a view to explore better chances of getting benefits both on the African side and on the Chinese side.[51]

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Less than a rejection of the United States, one of the sub-region's traditional partners together with the European Union, this trend may express these nations' desire to exploit that opportunity, which probably implies snubbing policies whose perceived objectives are to lock them up with stringent bilateral agreements. Interpreted against the recent invigoration in the United States' Africa policy and the creation of AFRICOM, this position suggests a refusal of any binding tête-à-tête with the United States.

The rejection of binding bilateral partnerships should not be underestimated. The Africans have not forgotten that the primary motivation of the European nations that colonized the continent in the nineteenth century, beyond imperial prestige, was to secure sources of raw materials for their economies boosted by the industrial revolution. They have not forgotten that the colonization process started with the signature of treaties, then protectorates whose stated purposes were to ensure their security and provide them with the assistance of incomparably advanced nations. Then, when the competition over the resources of the continent became fierce among the European nations, they sent their armies to annex territories. In the minds of many Africans, AFRICOM may represent, in the long term, nothing more than a repetition of the same process that deprived them oftheir liberties. As the founding father of the Kenyan nation, Jomo Kenyatta, famously said about religion and colonization:

> When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible.[52]

The West African nations' reaction to AFRICOM may signify, among other indications, that they wish to conserve their freedom of action and, most of all, the capacity to leverage the global competition over their resources.

Therefore, the eroding effect of China's influence on the United States' influence in West Africa is not necessarily the result of an absolute preference for China. It may rather be because China not only represents a highly attractive economic opportunity, especially for the future, but mostly because Beijing does not put forward, for the time being, a policy of area of influence backed by military might, as many Africans perceive AFRICOM to be.[53] As a matter of fact, a Pew Global Survey released in the spring 2007 indicates that West Africans tend to perceive the influence of China as less threatening for their nations as opposed to the United States' (figure 9):
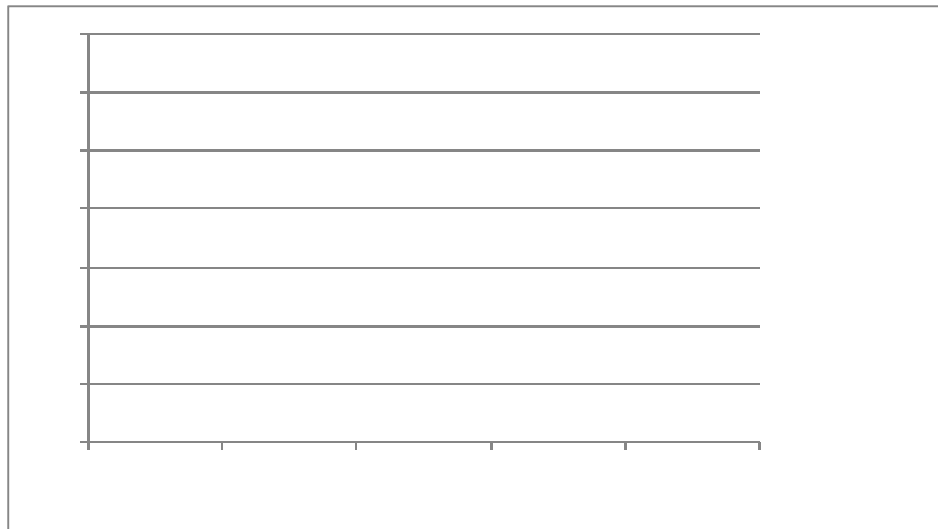
Figure 9.   Responses to the question: What countries or groups pose the greatest threat to (survey country) in the future?
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

Another aspect of the question is that some among the West African political elite prefer to deal with China because, as already mentioned, Beijing does not interfere with the management of their trade revenues and loans and does not impose on them good

governance conditions.[54] In that regard, some observers have highlighted the potential for increasing economic exchanges between China and the West African nations to undermine revenue transparency efforts led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and supported by the civil society and non-governmental organizations such as Transparency International.[55] Doubtless, this open-window for rampant corruption may seem attractive to many.

Some foreign policy experts argue that the United States' and China's interests in the region are not necessarily antagonistic, and that they could reach a gentlemen's agreement that could "avoid the trap of damaging and unnecessary strategic competition in Africa.[56] The only problem is that there is actually a necessity, nearly vital, for these countries to compete over Africa's energy resources. According to the International Energy Agency, the world's energy needs will be 50% higher in 2030, with China and India alone representing 45% of the increase. By 2030, China's energy needs will more than double, with a 5% annual growth.[57] The same study projects that vehicle sales in China will be multiplied by seven and will surpass the United States' market by 2015. Beijing already needs to add 1,300 GW to its electricity production, more than the current capacity existing in the entire United States. This study has already emphasized the importance of the energy resources of the African continent, and the Gulf of Guinea in particular, for the energy security of the United States. Gentlemen's agreements are conceivable when peripheral interests are at stake, but they are highly unlikely when they bear such a vital importance. In is not an accident that the United States and China's unprecedented interest in the region are almost simultaneous. There is little chance that they will not collide, for the new scramble for Africa is a zero-sum game over, among

other stakes, finite energy resources. In that game, China has been scoring key points over the last decade that, inevitably, undermine the influence of the United States in the continent in general and its western sub-region in particular.

2 - The War on Terror as a Cumbersome Heritage for AFRICOM

In analyzing the perception of the WOT in West Africa, this study seeks to demonstrate that the anti-terror narrative might be damaging to AFRICOM's efforts to win the Africans' subscription to the security partnership that it aims to build. To a large extent, the local perception of the WOT further fuels skepticism about some of the key lines of the command's strategic communication, especially now that it is already facing a significant amount of mistrust and suspicion. By presenting the WOT as one of its key objectives, AFRICOM might have made a strategic mistake and encumbered itself with an already highly controversial issue that cannot, to say the least, facilitate its acceptance in the sub-region. The conclusion that would be drawn from this analysis is that the WOT has a significant push-back effect in the sub-region and constitutes therefore a wrong line of effort for the command's strategic communications. By tuning down the antiterrorism narrative that has probably been far more controversial than the actual programs, which does not necessarily hinder it from pursuing its antiterrorist objectives, the command would certainly reduce a significant amount of the disquieting effect that it has on most of the states of the sub-region and on African public opinion as well. This study argues that, for the time being, the evocation of terrorism is too emotionally charged and stirs such heated controversies that it could only add to AFRICOM's current difficulties in winning the support of the Africans.

This study follows three axes of demonstration: that the WOT contradicts the security partnership that AFRICOM is advocating, that it tends to exacerbate religious tensions and fuel anti-American feelings in the sub-region, and finally that it raises ethical problems related to human rights abuses and liberticidal policies perpetrated in its name by some African regimes.

The initial axis of this demonstration is that the WOT, beyond the smoke of the political discourse on both sides, ultimately makes the point of an absence of commonality with regard to the security interests of the United States and the West African nations. It is, in many aspects, the wrong argument for AFRICOM's efforts to sway the subscription of the West African nations to the security partnership that it proposes. The impression that the WOT has been spreading, as it has been implemented in the sub-region, could hardly defend itself against rising criticism that it is strictly self-serving and oblivious of specific West African security concerns. To many African intellectuals, as this study will show, the WOT represents a perception of the security threats in West Africa that has been framed within an American paradigm that regards them almost exclusively from the viewpoint of the threat that the sub-region could represent for the security of the United States. This paradigm, which depicts the sub-region as a source of threats and spends little time emphasizing West Africa's own benefit in countering the menace of terrorism, makes it even easier for critics to denounce the selfishness of the WOT. Besides, African critics increasingly underscore the lack of evidence to support the erection of terrorism as a primary security concern in the sub-region, further putting into question the anti-terror narrative that AFRICOM has inherited. Many among the African intelligentsia argue that the looming threat that has

been agitated owes much to exaggeration, amalgam, and conventional wisdom. The conclusion of their discourse is, of course, that there must be unspoken motivations behind the WOT.

Furthermore, as the subsequent axis of analysis will strive to illustrate, the West African chapters of the WOT, in part because of the amalgams and exaggerations mentioned above, might have the pernicious result of exacerbating religious divides and religious identity crispations, especially in countries such as Nigeria and Mauritania. By fueling a widening perception of ideological crusade, humiliation and anger, it might be, ironically, providing propaganda arguments to the extremists who seek to radicalize the nearly 45% of Muslims in the sub-region and fan anti-American sentiments.

Finally, this study wishes to show that, because the WOT, in the continent in general as in West Africa, is already becoming more and more controversial, it is all the more harmful for the success of AFRICOM. The further deterioration of the security situation in the Horn of Africa, as exemplified by Somalia's dive into chaos, not only fails to convince of the effectiveness of the WOT, but it also increasingly inflames fears of destabilization and militarization of the United State's Africa policy. Rising criticism against some African states' utilization of the antiterrorism pretext to crack down on legitimate dissent, and the United States' support to some of them, holds a risk of turning the civil societies against AFRICOM and undermining the command's future credibility in supporting policies such as the Bush administration's democratization agenda and transformational diplomacy. In going further down that path, it might be more and more difficult for AFRICOM, in the future, to hold the moral high ground.

This study acknowledges that analyzing the pushback effect of the WOT against AFRICOM presents a singular complexity, for it is nearly impossible to tell apart the effects of the WOT as a global phenomenon from the effects of the WOT as it has been conducted in West Africa through the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI). In other words, specifying what in the West African elite's perception of the WOT is due to the United States' antiterrorist operations in the sub-region and what is due to the WOT in general is not an easy venture. Obviously, one should expect an interlacement in the perception of the global and local dimensions of the WOT. However, despite that difficulty, a close analysis requires considering the impact of the aspects of the WOT that are specific to the sub-region. Ideally, analyzing how the WOT affects West African opinions of the United States' Africa policy and AFRICOM should consider three levels that overlap significantly but do not necessarily merge. The primary and overarching level of analysis is global, since the policies and operations conducted under the WOT on the global level, such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, also shape local opinions on the United States' foreign policy, just as they do in other parts of the world. This initial level represents the global dimension of the impact of the WOT on West African opinions. The second level of analysis is continental, as the WOT's operations conducted in other parts of the continent, primarily in the Horn of Africa, and in Somalia in particular, also have a strong resonance in West Africa, although they do not affect it directly. The final level is sub-regional and concerns specifically the effects of the PSI and the TSCTI. Following this logic of narrowing focus, one may infer that the resonance of the WOT, in the perception of the West African elites, probably increases along with its proximity. In other words, it is

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likely that the perception of the WOT increases as its implications, in terms of programs and operations, get closer to their neighborhoods.

21 - The WOT's Sapping Effect on AFRICOM's Discourse of Mutually Benefiting Partnership

As any other region of the world, West Africa is responsive to the United States' antiterrorism strategy that has been, for the international environment, one of the most defining phenomena of this new century. The June 2007 Pew Global Survey mentioned above highlights the impact of the global dimension of the WOT on West African opinions. Although West Africa, as the African continent in general, appears to be less negatively affected, as compared to other parts of the world, it is in no way atypical in that it shows a waning support for the WOT. The survey indicates that the support for the WOT has declined in Ghana (63% to 59%) and Nigeria (70% to 63%) although it has remained stable in Ivory Coast (87%). The lowest level of support of the sub-region is in Senegal, where it is at 42%. Although showing positive approval rates, the survey nevertheless indicates an eroding trend that reveals a subtle, and perhaps paradoxical, characteristic of the West Africans' position with regard to the WOT. Although supportive of the principle of combating terrorism, the West Africans seem to disagree with its implementation. In this regard, the sub-region might still not be atypical compared to other regions of the world that, although condemning unequivocally the September 11 attacks and acknowledging the American people's right to justice, adopted a more critical position later on. That critical attitude is a common feature of the West African press on the issue, which is a firm condemnation of the terrorist attacks, but a critical attitude towards the Bush administration's response to them. On 14 September

2002, Nigeria's *This Day*, expressed "its reservations about Bush's reference to punishment for those responsible," and added that "this is hardly the time to contemplate or waste emotions on vengeance."[58] On March 17 of the same year, The Independent (Gambia) reported the even more radical position of the influential imam of the State House Mosque in Banjul:

> America is suffering the consequences of the use and abuse of that country's power... Only years of pent-up anger and frustration of those oppressed by U.S. foreign policy could result in such an attack."[59]

> On March 21 2003, the *Accra Daily Mail* (Ghana), close to the ruling New

Patriotic Party (NPP), voiced its concerns:

> Of course the United States and its coalition will win the war, but what scars will they be leaving? Saddam Hussein will be sacked, perhaps even killed, but that would not bring security to the world. […] There is a saying: "You cannot use a gun to kill a germ." True, you can't. And that is our fear.[60]

> The Lagos *Daily News* (Nigeria), a government-owned press organ, echoed these

concerns in its issue of the same day:

> The blatant, unguided use of force by the world's only superpower will inflict untold damage to the world economy and tear apart the international security structures. And if Iraq should be so wantonly bombarded with the civilized world doing nothing, no state, least of all those in the developing world, will be safe.[61]

> As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq went on, and the Bush administration's

response to the terrorist attacks developed into a global doctrine of preemptive strike,

West African newspapers further radicalized their criticism:

> African editorialists raised eyebrows at talk of an "axis of evil." And when reports of the "Bush Doctrine" of preemptive strikes crossed African editors' desks close on the heels of protests against the United States at the Johannesburg Summit in mid-August, incredulity changed to outrage that the United States seemed to have learned nothing from the September 2001 terrorist attacks.[62]

Fraternité Matin (Cote d'Ivoire), a government-owned newspaper, expressed that radicalizing position:

> Bush seems to be a dictator.…Does Washington really believe that this violation of what is left of "the international order" is likely to protect American interests and make American territory "inviolable?"[63]

The June 2007 Pew global survey already referenced by this study illustrates the gap between the sub-region's support to the WOT as a policy and its reaction to the way in which that strategy has been implemented. Asked about their opinions on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the West Africans respond as follows, indicating a majority of disagreement with the most significant aspects of the global WOT as it has been implemented (figures 9 and 10):
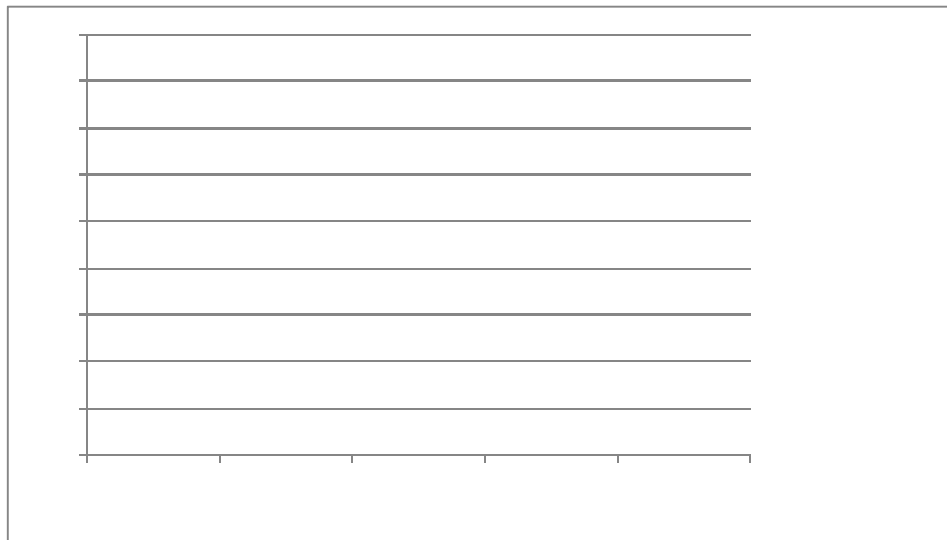
Figure 10.   Should the US keep its troops in Iraq, until the situation has stabilized, or should it remove them as soon as possible?
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.
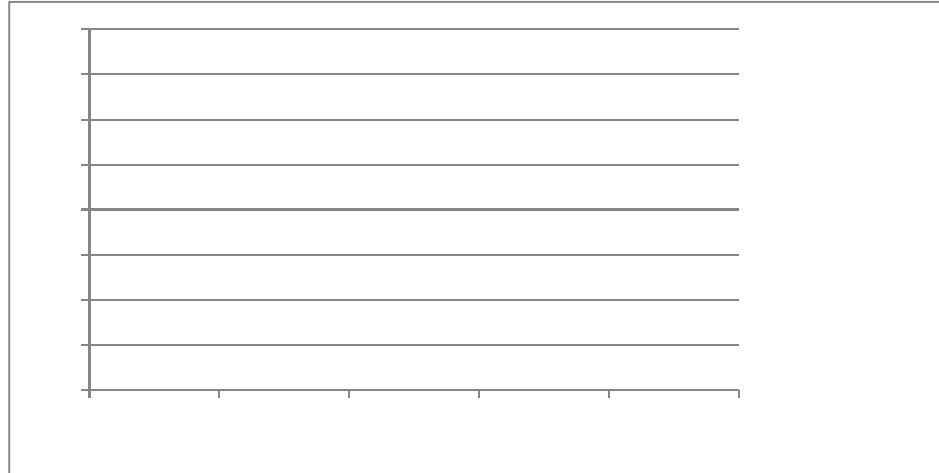
Figure 11.   Should the US and NATO keep their troops in Afghanistan, until the
situation has stabilized, or should they remove them as soon as possible?
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major
World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

Despite these negative reactions, at the political level, the sub-region has shown a

very significant level of support to the United States' antiterrorism efforts. From 2003 to

2006, very few countries of the sub-region have not cooperated in the US-led

antiterrorism campaign, either by passing had hoc agreements with the United States'

antiterrorism organisms, sharing intelligence, passing antiterrorism laws, or conducting

offensive operations against identified threats, such as in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.[64]

The West African public's reactions to the September 11 attacks, as translated in the

press, and policy measures adopted by local governments, both individually and

collectively under the regional institutions, suggest that the principle of combating the

terrorist threat is widely supported. Under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity

(OAU) and later the African Union (AU), the countries of the sub-region subscribed to

the expansion and development of the antiterrorism legal framework for the continent. At

the initiative of the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, the African heads of states

and governments convened an African Summit Against Terrorism that took place in Dakar on 17 October 2001.[65] The resulting Dakar Declaration Against Terrorism strongly condemned the terrorist attacks against the United States and expressed the Africans' collective position on the nature of terrorism:

> One of the AU's primary concerns for combating terrorism is that terrorism violates basic human rights, particularly freedom of expression, freedom from fear, the right to life, right to development, the right to practice religion and the right to security.[66]

The Senegalese authorities also submitted a draft protocol aimed at updating and expanding the OAU 1999 Algiers Convention on Terrorism, considered as one of the cornerstones of the continent's antiterrorism strategy. Several antiterrorism initiatives followed the Dakar Conference, among which:

- The Fifth Extraordinary Session of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which met at the ministerial level on 11 November 2001 in New York at the initiative of Sudan. It reaffirmed Africa's support to the Dakar Conference and called for the African nations' unreserved support to the UNSC 1373 Resolution[67] of September 2001 on Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

- The Inter-Governmental High Level Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, which met in Algiers in 11-14 September 2002 and adopted a Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa that the African Union endorsed subsequently.

- A meeting of experts convened in Addis Ababa in 28-29 October 2003 to consider Modalities for the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa.

- The creation in October 2004 of an African Centre for the Study and

Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) as an institution of the African Union Commission based in Algiers and presented as "a significant achievement in [Africa's] collective efforts to outlaw and eradicate the scourge of terrorism."[68] The mandate of the center is to provide the AU with the technical expertise necessary for its counterterrorism policies. [69]

These AU initiatives aimed at completing and actualizing the continent's antiterrorism legal framework, for which foundations had been laid under the OAU:

- In 1992, the 28th OAU Ordinary Summit in Dakar adopted Resolution AHG/Res. 213 (XXVIII) aimed at enhancing and coordinating efforts to counter extremism.

- In 1994, the Tunis 30th Ordinary Summit of the OAU adopted Declaration AHG/Decl. 2 (XXX) aimed at policing interstate relations and condemning fanaticism, extremism, terrorism, and the use of religion to justify violent acts.

- These initiatives culminated in 1999 with the 35th OAU Ordinary Summit of Algiers that adopted the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, known as the Algiers Convention, which established a continental-level legislative framework. The Algiers Convention covered key areas such as a definition of terrorism in Africa, antiterrorism cooperation among member states, extradition, and state jurisdiction. The Algiers Convention entered into force in 2002.[70]

These continental-level measures, strongly supported and sometimes initiated from the sub-region of West Africa, show an unquestionable political commitment against terrorism. However, a gap between the understanding of terrorism by the African nations, on the one side, and the United States, on the other side, existed from the beginning. After September 11 and the international focus on the question, the African

nations strove to expand the scope of the internationally accepted definition of terrorism

in order to include some of their own security concerns, or at least to avoid letting them

to be put on a back shelf. To that extent, they insisted on the recognition of the links

between terrorism and other types of threats. The AU insistently emphasizes that linkage:

> The linkages between terrorism and other scourges, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, money laundering and drug trafficking, are as dangerous as terrorism itself. These linkages serve as vehicles for terrorism, and it is now widely believed that terrorism cannot be eradicated without eliminating these linkages. In adopting the 1999 Algiers Convention, African leaders stated their awareness of the growing links between terrorism and organized crime, including illicit traffic of arms, drugs and money laundering.[71]

In fact, by purposefully insisting that the other scourges cited are "as dangerous as

terrorism itself", this declaration expressed, in diplomatic language, the AU's

disagreement with a perception of an undue exclusivity given to confronting terrorism.

This declaration is an early sign of a rarely expressed discrepancy between some African

nations and the United States about the prioritization of security threats.

In addition to the difference in priorities, the definition of terrorism further

accentuated the divergence. Actually, even among African nations, reaching a consensus

on a definition of terrorism was particularly arduous, to such an extent that African legal

drafters commonly skipped that obstacle and resorted to a *description of terrorism* that

speaks of *acts of terror* or *terrorist activity*.[72] The definition of terrorist acts by the

Algiers conference considers:

> Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State
> Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or
> freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person,
> any number or group of persons or causes or may cause
> damage to public or private property, natural resources,

environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

- intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or

- disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or

- create general insurrection in a State.

- any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in this paragraph.[73]

The most remarkable aspect of this definition may be that is has a noticeable domestic orientation and a quite broad scope. The internal orientation is not a surprise, given that the primary threats that the African regimes have to face are internal. Additionally, broadening the scope of the definition provides a convenient legal instrument against internal opponents. For the interest of this study, the domestic orientation of the African definition of terrorism will also bear much significance in consideration to these states' collaboration with the United States in fighting the threat, for what terrorism would mean for the two sides would barely converge. The United States' perception of terrorism, at least in its spirit, has indeed a largely international orientation. A simple explanation is that the terrorist threat affecting the United States, at

least as it is perceived and despite the existence of domestic concerns, is largely

exogenous, while it is endogenous for the African nations that it affects.

Compared to the African nations', the United States' perception of terrorism has a

much narrower focus. This was largely illustrated by the fact that the antiterrorist focus of

the United States in Africa almost exclusively targeted potential Al Qaeda affiliates

whose global Jihad agendas were manifest. In comparison, the existence of militia groups

that has practiced wide spread terrorist campaigns, such the Lord Resistance Army

(LRA) in Uganda or the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, has

remained largely inconsequential. Apart from Jihad-oriented organizations such as the

Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (former GSPC), the

Department of State's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) does not include any

other African organization.[74] From the perspective of the West African nations, this has

obvious implications. The most important is perhaps legal, since the designation of

terrorist organizations by DoS is a legal process that falls under the section 219 of the

United States Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and the Intelligence Reform and

Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004. These provide a legal authority for the

United States' security institutions to act against these groups. Another aspect is that,

besides being a foreign organization, the "organization's terrorist activity or terrorism

must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense,

foreign relations, or the economic interests) of the United States."[75] Beyond being simply

an expression of self-centeredness, the United States' focus on the international

dimension of the terrorist threat in West Africa is in fact the manifestation of the return of

a *globalist* logic that tends to focus on international influences as primary factors of

instability in the sub-region.[76] This logic, as it dominated the United States' Africa policy of the Cold War, focuses primarily on containing external threats. As such, it diverges from the *regionalist* logic that focuses on factors internal to the sub-region and to its states.

Consequently, and similarly to the Cold War period, this *globalist* logic tends to give three key characteristics to the United States' West Africa policy.[77] The first one is an inclination to consider the sub-region as the theater of proxy wars against international enemies (here global terrorism), just as it was the case against the communist bloc.[78] The second characteristic is a tendency to consider the West African nations as instruments in a strategy aimed at confronting non West African threats, now global terrorism.[79] The final characteristic is a tendency to subordinate the United States' relations with the West African nations to their importance in the new containment, regardless to their records in democracy and respect for civil liberties.[80] Apparently, the WOT pushes for a return of the Cold War paradigm within the West Africa policy, a paradigm in which the sub-region had little value in itself, but only mattered with regarded to external considerations. This logic is, obviously, difficult to reconcile with AFRICOM's partnership agenda.

Another key divergence with regard to the definition of terrorism lies in the Algiers Convention's article 3:

> Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, the struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces shall not be considered as terrorist acts.[81]

The spirit of this caveat, almost unique to the African definition of terrorism, is to be found, of course, in the continent's past struggle against colonialism during which most of the liberation movements were labeled *terrorist*.

The above discrepancies feed a common opinion, among some African intellectual milieus, that, in fact, there is little commonality of purpose between the United States and the African nations with regard to fighting terrorism. These observers argue that neither the perception of the threat nor the purposes converge.

> There have developed double standards as a result of the differentiation between domestic and transnational terrorism. Although it is not implied that transnational terror organisations do not pose a direct threat through their reach and capabilities, an analyst finds it frustrating that the international community waits until a group aligns itself with al-Qa'eda before considering it a threat. What about the countless lives lost before this happens?[82]

A common criticism of the WOT, among the African intelligentsia, is that there is no indication that the internal security concerns of a given African state have fallen into the antiterrorist focus of the United States without having an international dimension, meaning without having the potential of affecting American security interests.

> Consequently, African people are driven even further away from leading world powers that almost exclusively hunt for al-Qa'eda or associated operatives. Furthermore, the War on Terrorism debate leads to a growing perception that terrorism, as perceived by the US, is the only threat.[83]

The reality is that, while the United States focuses primarily on the international Islamic Jihad, which has demonstrated its destructive capacity, West African nations remain concerned by internal threats that fall out of the scope of the WOT. The result of this absence of community of purpose with regard to terrorism is that, despite the appearances, the West African nations' genuine interest in the WOT deserves further examination. A sign of that lack of genuine concern could be found in the fact that the

sub-region did not bother to develop a sub-regional counterterrorism initiative, as East

Africa did with the IGAD Capacity Building Program Against Terrorism (ICAT) of the

Inter-Governmental Agency on Development (IGAD).[84] As early as 2001, the Dakar

Declaration included the expression of the Africans' apprehension for the struggle against

terrorism to overshadow their primary concerns and have a "possible adverse impact on

African development and on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's

Development (NEPAD).[85] In other words, the concern was for the antiterrorism strategy

of the United States to signify overlooking their own security issues and, perhaps as

important, putting into question the financial assistance of the United States. Moreover,

as this study will examine farther, there is a widening consensus among independent

observers that these nations' unspoken objective might have been to instrumentalize the

WOT in order to obtain financial and logistic assistance and a clearance to crack down on

internal opposition groups. The reality might be that they have considered the WOT as a

means, not an end. Dr. Gani Yoroms, a senior fellow at the Watson Institute of

International Studies, Brown University, and current Director of the Center for Strategic

Research and Training at the National War College of Nigeria, expressed a position that

is becoming more and more public:

> …The lack of sincerity exhibited by some African leaders in their execution of
> the war against terrorism poses a serious challenge. It has been argued that some
> African leaders have been using the counter-terrorism ideology to undermine
> human rights and suppress opposing views. This factor has led to widespread
> protest against the enactment of anti-terrorism legislation while government anti-
> terror policies are viewed with suspicion.[86]

In summary, the lack of genuine and objective community of interests with regard

to fighting terrorism, makes the WOT the wrong incentive for the security partnership

that AFRICOM has been proposing to the West African nations. The result of this lack

might have been that it convinced them of a fundamental divergence between their security interests and those of the United States. Furthermore, it might have made the point of the United States' disinterest in their own security concerns. As early as 2002, a CRS report on Africa and the War on Terror underlined these concerns:

> Some African officials are concerned that despite the strong support African governments have provided to the anti-terror campaign, they are not seen as real coalition partners in the fight against terrorism. African officials note that cooperation between the United States and Africa in the fight against terrorism should also include extraditing and apprehending members of African terrorist and extremist groups active in Europe and the United States.[87]

By advancing the card of the WOT, AFRICOM may have convinced that it pursues a parochial agenda that leaves little room for the West African nations' security threats, undermining the credibility of the mutually beneficial partnership that it advocates. What flows from this is that, in advancing the line of a common preoccupation in fighting terrorism, AFRICOM might only find a shallow response from the West African side and fall short of convincing them to join the long-term security partnership that it puts forwards.

22 - The WOT and Islam in West Africa

To further advance the analysis on the negative effects that the WOT may bring to perceptions of AFRICOM in the sub-region, the impact of religion would be interesting to measure. Indeed, whether there is a positive correlation between the religious making of the nations of West Africa and their attitudes towards the WOT would be particularly significant for this study. This would allow assessing whether these opinions about the WOT just follow the global trend or whether, on the contrary, they represent a more deeply rooted and enduring trend. If such correlation exists, it would mean that there

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probably is a tendency for West Africans' opinions about the United States' foreign

policy to be distributed along religious lines. In other words, religion, and Islam in

particular, might represent a major element to consider for the United States' policy in

West Africa and for the architects of AFRICOM.

> Many Africans view their own militaries as repressive or corrupt and associate the
> U.S. military with unpopular foreign policy decisions, such as the invasion and
> occupation of Iraq. High-profile counterterrorism exercises risk drawing attention
> to developing military alliances and eliciting an emotional reaction from the
> population.[88]

This study argues that the WOT has the potential of, and some observers state that

it already is, driving growing segments of the Muslim community of West Africa into

developing a *siege mentality* and turning them into an opposing force against a further

engagement of the United States in the sub-region.[89]

A survey conducted in Nigeria in 2006 by the Pew Global Project tends to

indicate that in that country at least, opinions concerning the United States' foreign policy

sharply divide Muslims and Christians. It is interesting to note that Nigerian opinions

with regard to the other countries covered by the survey – Germany, France, Japan, and

China – do not even approach a similarly acute split (figure 12).
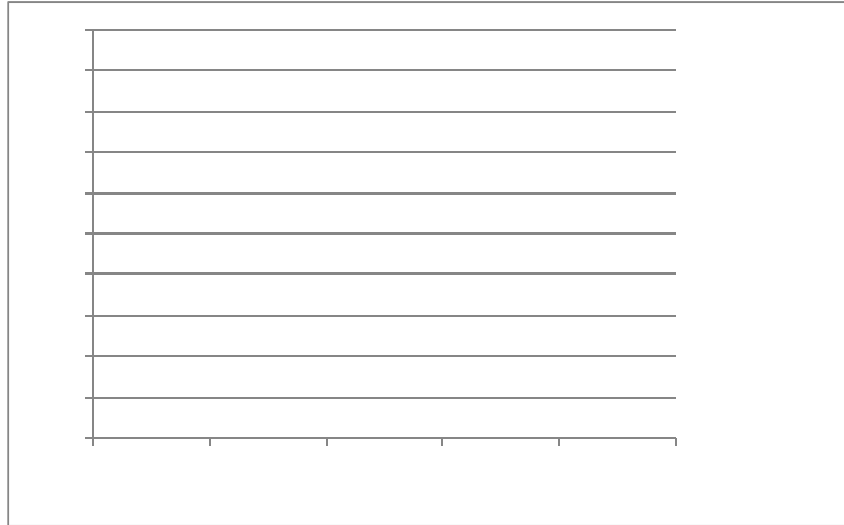
Figure 12.   Nigerian opinions on US, Germany, France, Japan, and China.
Data Source: No Global Warming Alarm in the US, China – America's Image Slips, But Allies Share US Concerns over Iran, Hamas. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 13 June 2006.

        Asked by the survey mentioned above whether they favor or oppose the United States' led WOT, Nigerians respond as follows (figure 13):
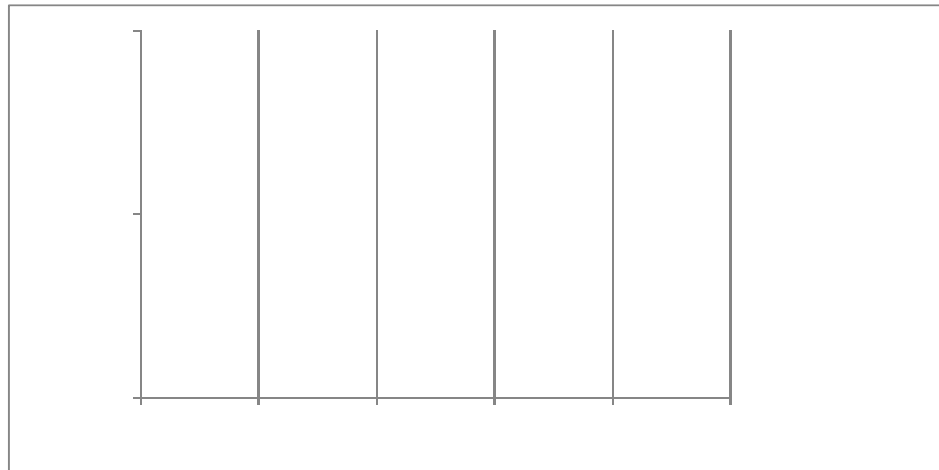
Figure 13.   Nigerians' opinions on the WOT
Data Source: No Global Warming Alarm in the US, China – America's Image Slips, But Allies Share US Concerns over Iran, Hamas. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 13 June 2006.

The chart below (figure 14) further confirms the religious divide that affects Nigerians' vision of the world:
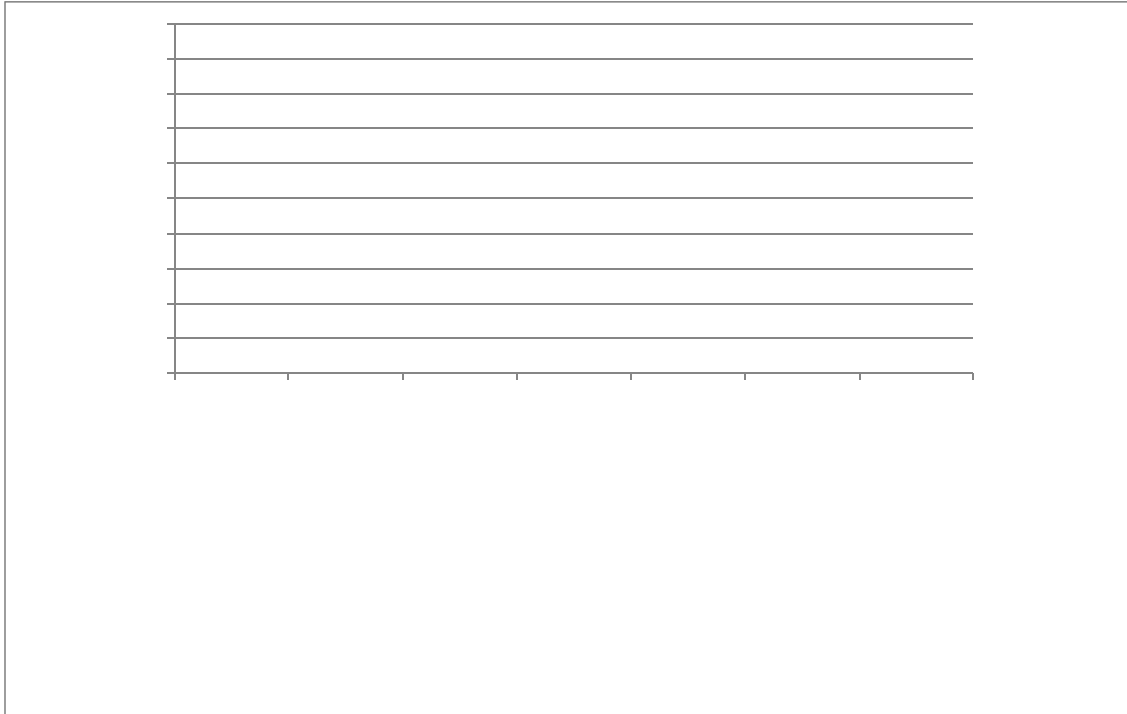
Figure 14.   Nigerian views of the world.
Data Source: No Global Warming Alarm in the US, China – America's Image Slips, But Allies Share US Concerns over Iran, Hamas. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 13 June 2006.

According to prominent analysts, including Princeton N. Lyman, former United States' ambassador to Nigeria and South Africa, the country is on the brink of religious conflagration:

> In Nigeria, for example, a potent mix of communal tensions, radical Islamism, and anti-Americanism has produced a fertile breeding ground for militancy and threatens to tear the country apart.[90]

It seems that the effects of the government's anti-terror campaigns have further widened Nigeria's explosive religious divide. On December 2007, the secretary general

of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN), Alhaji Nafiu Baba-Ahmed , issued

an infuriated statement condemning the government's anti-terrorist campaign:

> All security agencies in the country, especially the SSS should be prevailed upon
> to shed their religious prejudice and operate with absolute transparency, fairness
> and put an end to the glaring double standard, hatred and bias against Muslims
> and their faith. Our security agencies and their operatives should be made to do
> their job transparently, with utmost sense of responsibility and patriotism, and
> should not get carried away by their personal religious prejudices or worse still,
> American propaganda.[91]

Mauritania is another case of preoccupying islamization with an indirect

contributing role played by the WOT. Some observers argue that there is a common

tendency, in the minds of the Mauritanians, to associate antiterrorism to political

repression, as the former regime of Ould Taya largely used that pretext to justify its

ruthless practices.[92] Because of Ould Taya's opportunistic conversion to the WOT to

save his moribund regime, and the support that he received through the PSI and the

TSCTI, the population naturally associated the WOT to the execrated power.[93] In June

2005, hundreds of Mauritanians demonstrated against the TSCTI, just two months before

the toppling of the regime by a bloodless military coup.[94]

In reality, worsening socio-economic conditions might have been influential as

well and it would not be fair to charge the WOT as the sole cause of radicalization in

Mauritania. However, as far the local population's perception, that question bears little

relevance. The fact is that burgeoning radical groups commonly point at an *American

offensive against Islam* as their primary grievance, which, given the Mauritanians'

experience of the WOT under Ould Taya, represents a powerful propaganda line. Several

recent developments indicate that Mauritania's so far tolerant approach to Islam is

adopting a conservative and defensive, if not openly aggressive stance. On 1 February

2008, three presumed Islamist gunmen opened fire on the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott, in an attack "that revived concern over signs of increased Islamic militancy."[95] On December 27 2007, unidentified gunmen killed three Mauritanian soldiers in the north of the country in an act that they described as "a hit against the FLINTLOCK plan put in place by the enemy of God, America, and its agents in the region."[96] That attack preceded another December 2007 ambush in which presumed GSPC affiliates assassinated four French tourists 250 km east of Nouakchott.[97] The significant increase in the budget of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, $12 million in 2008, and the explosion of the number of mosques in the capital, from 58 in 1989 to 900 in 2008, is another symptom of the islamizing trend in the country.[98] According to Mauritanians interviewed by the United Nations' Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), these signs are easily noticeable in the society:

> I remember 20 years ago during [the Muslim holy month] Ramadan no-one fasted but today everyone does, or they are met with disapproval. There are also more veiled women and more bearded men. We've let this develop without realising [it].[99]

> Another Mauritanian interviewee added:

> Increasingly, people are using satellite television – ubiquitous all around the vast, Saharan country and especially in the vast slums that ring Nouakchott's sandy centre – to tune in to Arab channels with debates on Jihad [Holy War] and analyses on the whereabouts of fugitive al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden.[100]

At the scale of the sub-region, the correlation between religion (measured as the percentage of Muslims in the population) and attitudes towards the WOT (measured as opinions about OIF) appears to be a strong one, as indicated by the following chart (figure 15):

Correlations

		Muslims	Opinion
Muslims	Pearson Correlation	1	.875*
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.026
	N	5	5
Opinion	Pearson Correlation	.875*	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.026	
	N	5	5

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Figure 15.   Correlation matrix of Muslim percentages and opinions on the WOT in West Africa

Data Source: No Global Warming Alarm in the US, China – America's Image Slips, But Allies Share US Concerns over Iran, Hamas. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 13 June 2006.

The correlation matrix above presents a Pearson correlation coefficient of .875, which at the 0.05 level, indicates that there is a strong relationship between the percentage of Muslims in a given West African country and opinions about the WOT. The scattergram below also illustrates the existence of that strong relationship (figure 16):
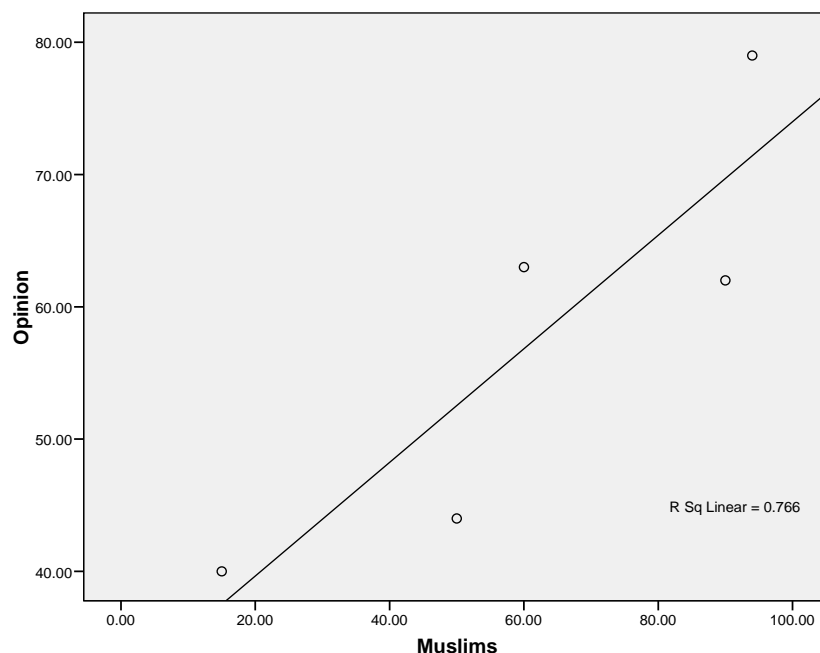
Figure 16.   Scattergram of opinions on the WOT and Muslim percentages.
Data Source: No Global Warming Alarm in the US, China – America's Image Slips, But Allies
Share US Concerns over Iran, Hamas. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center,
13 June 2006.

What conclusions could one draw from the evidence of this relationship? Almost

the entire literature on the United States' West Africa policy has considered Islam as a

neutral factor and has tended to overlook its impact, as opposed to the North and East of

the continent where its manifestations are more apparent. Indeed, the conventional

wisdom is that West Africa experiences an atypical and apolitical form of Islam,

primarily of the tolerant Sufi doctrine that belongs to the Maliki legal branch of Sunni

Islam, and does not identify itself with other portions of the Muslim world. According to

this view, the Sufi brotherhoods that strongly influence the sub-region - Qadrya, Tijanya,

and Mouridya – are too inclusive, too syncretic, too superficially rooted or too little intrinsically confrontational to constitute a fertile ground for the global revival of militant Islam. The reality might be slightly different. A common pattern of thinking, largely inherited from the colonial period, tends to give a distorted vision of West Africa that overlooks the actual role of Islam and the sub-regions' past and present relationship with the Islamic world in shaping opinions and attitudes. Historically, West African anthropology and sociology, long monopolized by Western colonizers, have tended to downplay the impact of the Muslim belief and its corollary sense of identity by "ignoring Islam, misrecognizing the cultural legacy of Islam in today's lives beyond self-professed Muslims."[101] Since part of the colonialist narrative was about helping a backward and godless region of the world enter history, in part through evangelization, it would not have made sense to acknowledge its centuries of previous relationship with other parts of the globe and the already wide influence of Islam.[102] Perhaps, as a renowned African anthropologist of the Indiana University puts it:

> We need to resituate West Africa in our imagination by placing its historical links to Islam and the Mediterranean at the center of our view of it. […] For several centuries, Islam served as a template and vehicle for the exchange of many traits between West Africa and the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Middle East. The canvas of meanings thus created shaped people and milieus well beyond the ranks of confessed Muslims. This cultural content resurfaces today, sometimes stripped of its overt religious significance...[103]

To use a religious analogy, West African Muslims do not turn their faces to Mecca only in the physical posture of the prayer. A large part of their world view is also shaped by their religion. A common denominator of Sufi brotherhoods is that they represent a large part of the societal tissue within the communities in which they are implanted.[104] In some cases, they are the dominant elements of the civil society, as in

Senegal where the brotherhoods' influence exceeds largely the religious realm. That these

brotherhoods have not constituted obstacles to the emergence of secular institutions is a

historical fact, but it should not be mistaken as mere disinterest for politics *per se*. In fact,

as in the case of Senegal, they do not need to compete with the secular institutions since

they actually retain the reality of the power, a power of influence that is all the more

important in that it relies on the dogma of the infallibility of an informal clergy of

marabouts. Besides, the cultural links between the sub-region and the Middle East have

remained intense throughout history, through education exchanges between Islamic

colleges and religious events such as the pilgrimage (Hajj). These links have also been

revived through international Muslim charity organizations and the financial assistance

that the petro-monarchies of the Persian Gulf commonly grant to the West African

members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). In Mali, for instance, 106

Islamic NGOs are currently operating as compared to six under the authoritarian regime

of Moussa Traoré. Present mainly in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, these NGO's

establishment is facilitated by the Muslim cardinal rules of community (*oumma*) and alms

giving (*zakaat*). They focus primarily on building Islamic schools (madrassas) and

mosques, assisting the poor, and preaching a rigorist form of Islam.[105]

In conclusion, the correlation between religion and attitudes towards the WOT

might add credibility to what some observers have claimed to be a slow tendency towards

islamization in West Africa. Moreover, it may confirm the contributing role that they

hold the WOT to play in the revival in West African Muslims' awareness of their Islamic

identities.[106] In the broader perspective of constitutionalism, the revival of Islamism

could only undermine the sub-region's traditional postcolonial secular states and

apolitical Islam. In the narrower focus of the United States' policy in West Africa and

AFRICOM's efforts to sell itself, it is already exacerbating anti-American feelings in part

as a negative reaction to the WOT, but also from a perceived bias in the United States'

handling of the Israel-Palestine crisis and other issues involving Muslim populations.

This alleged trend is all the more preoccupying in that the sub-region has been known for

its tolerant and accommodating form of Islam.

Beyond the global tendency of negative responses to the WOT, the presence of a

significant Muslim population in West Africa, along with its growing inclination to see

the world through the prism of its religion, might represent an unexpected challenge for

the United States' foreign policy and AFRICOM. West Africa might have developed a

radicalizing reaction to the WOT that, as opposed to similar reactions in other parts of the

world, has autonomous local dynamics. In consequence, the antiterrorist agenda that

AFRICOM has inherited could do little in eliminating the mistrust that it is already

facing.[107]

23 - The WOT's Ethical Predicament in West Africa

At the sub-regional level of analysis, the criticism against the WOT amidst the

African intellectual elite, which AFRICOM largely inherits, develops an argument that

fuels a significant amount of the West Africans' prejudices against the command. As

mentioned above with regard to Mauritania, the WOT is being given increasingly

negative connotations among the intelligentsia of the sub-region, as well as external

observers.[108] These allegations are not only worrisome for AFRICOM's current efforts to

win hearts-and-minds, but more importantly for its future credibility in supporting such

an agenda. In fact, the target of this criticism is not the WOT in itself, through the PSI

and the TSCTI, but its alleged exploitation by some regimes to advance their repressive

agendas. Doubtlessly, these allegations have serious implications for the United States'

Africa policy, as they tend to discredit its stated support to democracy, human rights, and

civil liberties. As a matter of fact, the 2006 National Security Strategy for the United

States of America has identified the nexus between political repression and terrorism:

> Transnational terrorist are recruited from people who have no voice in their own government and see no legitimate way to promote change in their own country. Without a stake in the existing order, they are vulnerable to manipulation by those who advocate a perverse vision based on violence and destruction.[109]

Given the WOT's potential of misfiring, a legitimate question, to start with, is

whether its deployment in West Africa relies on substantive evidence of the existence of

a terrorist threat or the potential for its development. The Horn of Africa's mix of

lawlessness, state decay, and radical Islamism has led to a relative consensus on the

seriousness of the threat in that area.[110] Decades of civil war in Algeria and rising violent

Islamic militantism in Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia, have also made evidence of terrorist

activity in North Africa.[111] The theory of an imminent terrorist threat in West Africa uses

three main arguments:

- The sub-region's ungoverned Sahelian belt is likely to provide safe-havens to transnational terrorist organizations, on the model of Afghanistan for Al Qaeda.
- Terrorist organizations already exist to the north, such as the GSPC in Algeria, and are already active in seeking expansion across the Sahara into Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.
- Al Qaeda affiliates have struck on the continent, namely against the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salam in 1998 and an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombassa in 2002.

The problem with this argument is that it presents serious weaknesses to observers familiar with the sub-region. First, the "ungoverned" status of the Sahara is a centuries old phenomenon. Indeed, the area has always hosted smuggling activities involving salt, gold, weapons, slaves, and lately cigarettes. It is also true that the Sahelian states have never managed to control their porous borders. The north of Mali, for instance, is, according to the American ambassador to Bamako, a huge no-man's-land of the size of Texas.[112] However, the spreading of the terrorist threat across the Sahara, or its utilization as a safehaven by Al Qaeda operatives, remains to be substantiated. The reality is that an intensive terrorist activity existed in the Maghreb throughout the last decade of the 20th century, in Algeria especially, without affecting the Sahel in any fashion. The Global Terrorism Database (GTD), an information source based at the University of Maryland and developed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), with funding from the United States Department of Homeland Security, attests the non-expansionist nature of the terrorist activity from North Africa into the Sahel region. For the 1970-1997 period, the initial set of data (GTD1) yields the following information with regard to the question (figure 17):
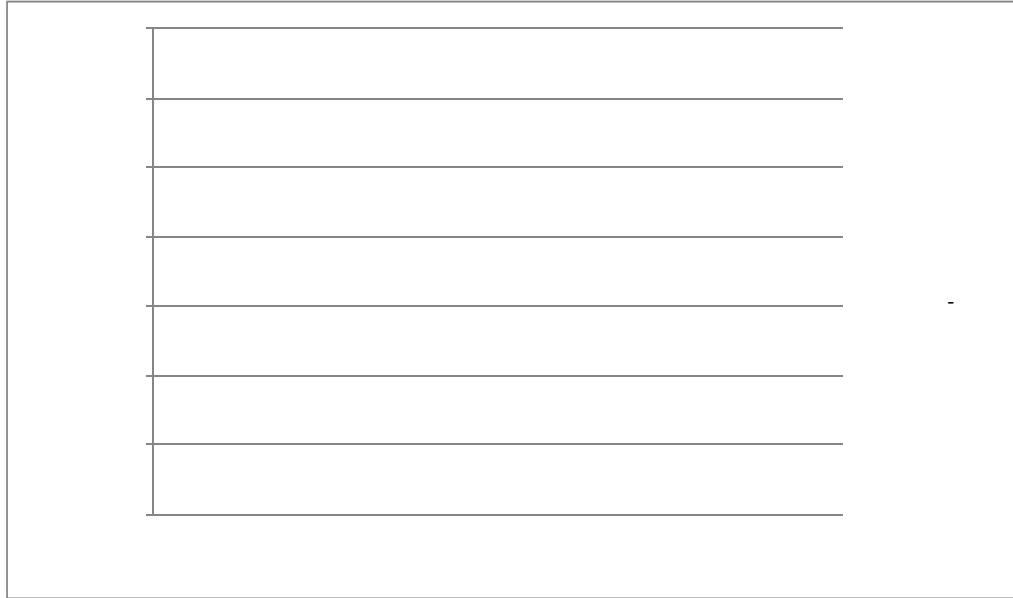
Figure 17.   Terrorists incidents in Algeria and the Sahel region in 1970-1997.
Data Source: Global Terrorism Database 2 (Open GTD 1), National Consortium for the Study of
Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland.
http://www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd/.

The above data is even more interesting when broken down by incidents. In

Niger, for instance, almost all the 45 terrorist incidents listed were, in fact, related to the

Tuareg insurgency waged by the Saharan Revolutionary Armed Front (FARS), the

Democratic Front for Renewal (FDC), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of the

Sahara (FDLS), and the Air-and-Azawak Liberation Front (FLA). The rest is made of

incidents that occurred during student demonstrations. In Mali, as well, the so-called

terrorist incidents are of the same nature and were mainly related to the Tuareg guerillas.

In Mauritania, the incidents were also related to an insurgency, the Polisario Front. At the

same time, although most of the 1,159 incidents cited for Algeria took place in a context

of civil war, their Islamic and terrorist connotations were unmistakable. In any case, it is

surprising that during this long period, the Islamic terrorism that was plaguing the

Maghreb did not extend to the Sahel region.

For the 1998-2004 period, and with a newer scheme of data collection (GTD2)

that uses more restrictive criteria, the database gives the following results (figure 18):
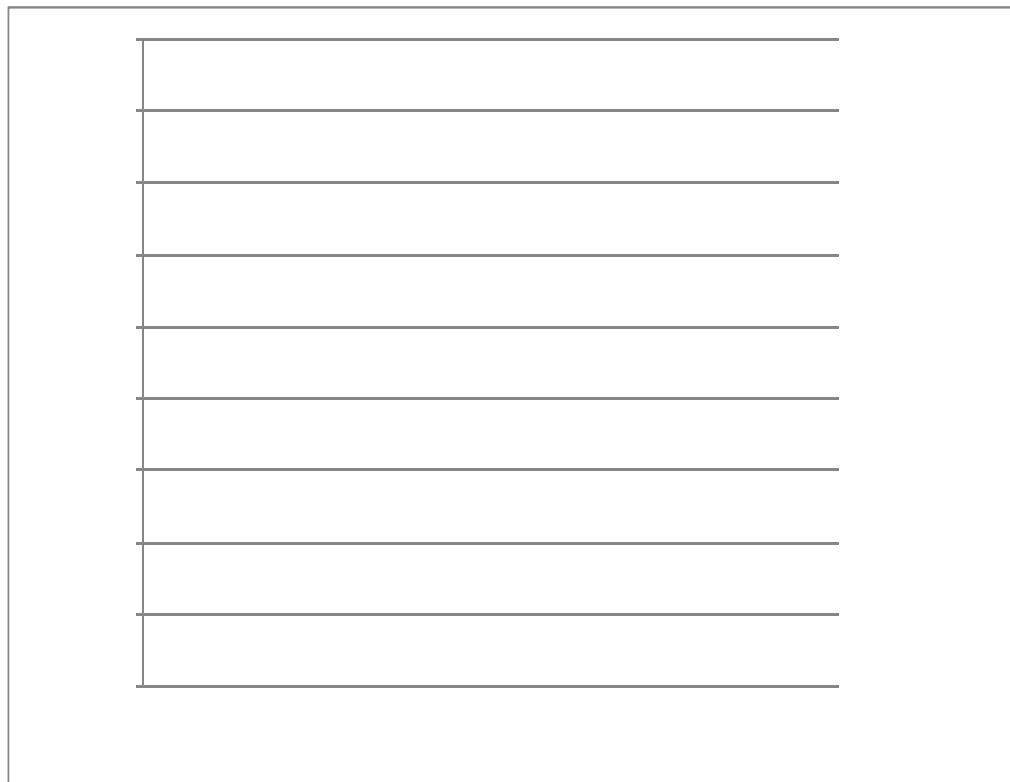
Figure 18.   Terrorist incidents in Algeria and the Sahel region in 1998-2004.
Data Source: Global Terrorism Database 2 (Open GTD 2), National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland.
http://www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd/.

It is noteworthy that with selection criteria that eliminate guerilla-related and

student riot incidents, the number of terrorist acts recorded in the Sahel region decreases

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dramatically. Moreover, even the incidents mentioned for Mauritania and Niger did not have known Islamic motivations.

Several authorized observers have denied the validity of the existence of a major terrorist threat in the Sahara region and contested the soundness of the reports of the American intelligence services on that matter.[113] In general, these observers hold these reports to be alarmist, through amalgams, if not purposefully misleading.[114] The International Crisis Group (ICG), a prominent and highly influential international security think-tank, issued a report in 2006 that denied that the Sahara region was a hotbed for terrorism.[115] According to the ICG, the identification of the Sahara as a terrorist hotbed proceeds from a confusion between forms of Islamic revival, mainly of Salafi inspiration, that have neither the same meaning nor the same agenda. A common mistake highlighted by the ICG report is to confuse *Salafiya Jihadya* (Fighting Salafiya) with *Salafya Illmya* (Scholarly Salafya). Indeed both advocate a return to strict orthodoxy, literally to the practices of the first third generations of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and both explain the current "decline of the Islamic civilization" by invoking a deviance from the "original path." However, there are essential differences between the *Salafya Illmya*, the branch of the *Salafya* movement that has appeared lately in the Sahara region, and the violent, proselytizing and combatant *Salafya Jihadya*. Although rigorist in its approach to Islam, the *Salafya Illmya* is known to be apolitical and non-violent. As opposed to the *Salafya Jihadya*, which has a stated anti-Western focus, this form of Salafism devotes its activism to extirpating the innovations (*bida'a*) and heresies (*shirk*) introduced in Islam by the Sufi brotherhoods.

The other wave of fundamentalism that contributed in the perceived revival of

Islamism in the sub-region, the *Jama'at al Tabligh*[1] or *Dawa al Tabligh*[2], have as well no

known record of political activism or violence. Often compared to the Jehovah's

Witnesses, this community is probably the world's largest Muslim missionary society.

Introduced in Mali and Mauritania through the channel of migrants from these countries

that are established in France, this society advocates a community-focused form of Islam

that relies on "communal identity and mutual support."[116] Marc Sageman, of the

University of Pennsylvania Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict

and Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, stated before the National

Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States:

> Not all Muslim fundamentalists are the same. Just like European socialists acted
> as a bulwark against Soviet communism last century, peaceful fundamentalist
> Muslim groups such as the Tablighi Jamaat may help to promote a peaceful
> message and repudiate terrorist violence.[117]

In reality, the theory of an expansionist terrorist threat into the Sahel thrived on

the grand saga of the GSPC and its 2003 abduction of 31 European tourists who were

released later on in exchange of an alleged €5 million ransom from the German

government.[118] The problem is that although it played a sanguinary part in the Algerian

civil war, the GSPC nebula "would be better described as bandit groups, the latest in a

long line of outlaws who have sought refuge in the wastes of the Sahara, rather than

tentacles of a centralized organ of Al Qaeda."[119] The fact is that, apart from that

abduction of European tourists for ransom, the GSPC has not conducted any proven

terrorist action or manifestation in the Sahel. Its latest manifestation was another

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[1] Community for the Propagation of the Faith
[2] Preaching of the Faith

kidnapping for ransom, this time of two Austrian tourist captured on 22 February 2008.[120] Yet, few observers seem to have been surprised by the oddity of an Islamic group, allegedly affiliated with Al Qaeda, demanding ransoms to release its hostages. Few have objected that Al Qaeda has never asked ransoms nor released hostages willingly, and that asking ransoms for the release of "infidels" did not fit into the Holly Jihad narrative. On the contrary, these GSPC tribulations served as arguments to confirm the growing terrorist threat in the Sahel belt.[121]

Very few also objected to the oddity of an allegedly "significant, very dangerous and potentially growing"[122] threat being almost decimated in a matter of days and its chief captured by Chadian rebels of the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT). Growing suspicion surrounds now the El Para narrative among independent observers and many holds it to be a disinformation campaign forged by the Algerian Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS) in order to obtain a resumption of American weapon sales and an absolution for Algiers' controversial counterterrorist methods.[123] As a matter of fact, Algiers succeeded in warming up its relations with Washington, after they were shunned during the Cold War and frozen under the brutal antiterrorist campaign of the 1990s, thanks to "a realization on both sides that they face similar threats from Islamic militants." In February 2006, Donald Rumsfeld paid to Algiers the first visit of an American Secretary of Defense ever.[124] As in the case of Algeria, the fact that governments, and often controversial ones with regard to their human rights records, are the main beneficiaries of the WOT might be its most serious ethical problem and the source of much of the criticism that it receives.

A significant number of human rights activists of the sub-region argue that the WOT, at least through its hijacking by some disreputable regimes, and its associated reduction of the pressure for democratization, contradicts two of the key tenets of the Bush administration's Africa policy, the democratization agenda and the transformational diplomacy.[125] The fact is that the WOT lacked an essential component in its strategy in West Africa: a freedom agenda. Instead, it has been largely perceived by human rights activists, political opposition groups, and civil society organizations as laissez-faire for governmental infringements on civil liberties. As a result, the Bush administration is growingly "criticized for having a split focus, cultivating relationships with dictators and at the same time urging for democratic reform."[126] In October 2004, a National Human Rights Institutions Forum organized under the aegis of the African Union deplored "the swell of human rights violations that occur as a direct result of the international fight against terrorism."[127] Some observers argue that the United States' own antiterrorist strategy, especially in its aspects related to civil liberties and judicial rights, weakened its moralist stance and inevitably loosened the pressure on the African autocrats. According to these, several African states, including Mauritania and Nigeria, have passed anti-terror related laws on the model of the United States Patriot Act that have been used to squash freedom of the press, as well as dissent.[128] According to Human Rights Watch, some regimes of the sub-region "cynically attempted to take advantage of the anti-terror struggle to intensify their own crackdowns on political opponents, separatists and religious groups, or to suggest they should be immune from criticism of their human rights practices."[129] The fact is that American officials made public statements praising very controversial methods once condemned by the United States. Secretary Powell

declared on 26 September 2001, in a joint press conference with the Egyptian Ministry of

Foreign Affairs:

> And I also expressed my appreciation for the commitment that Egypt has made to
> working with us as we move forward to deal with the scourge of terrorism. Egypt,
> as all of us know, is really ahead of us on this issue. They have had to deal with
> acts of terrorism in recent years in the course of their history. And we have much
> to learn from them and there is much we can do together.[130]

During a visit to Algiers in 2002, William Burns, Assistant Secretary of State for

Near Eastern and Northern African Affairs, declared in the same vein:

> "Washington has much to learn from Algeria on ways to fight terrorism."[131]

Such an implicit appraisal of notoriously brutal regimes, once chided by the

United States for their human rights shortcomings, was largely interpreted as a licence to

repress. For some autocratic regimes, the United States had lowered the standards for

democracy and human rights. The Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarrak, best voiced the

ambient mood:

> There is no doubt that the events of September 11 created a new concept of
> democracy that differs from the concept that Western states defended before these
> events, especially in regard to the freedom of the individual.[132]

Even Charles Taylor's Liberia tried a cynical, and burlesque, exploitation of the

fight against terrorism to buy itself a new virginity while cracking down on his political

adversaries. In June 2002, Taylor had four troublesome journalists, Hassan Bility,

Ansumana Kamara, Abubakar Kamara, and Blama Kamara, arrested and held them

incommunicado on charges of "operating a rebel terrorist cell." The judge refused to

allow them a fair and public trial, because of their status of "illegal combatant", and

argued they had to be tried by military jurisdiction.[133] In Nigeria, the Antiterrorist Squads

of the late dictator Sani Abacha are still a sore memory. Though these squads never

arrested any terrorist, they proved an effective means "to terrorise the media, human rights community, the pro-democracy movement and other real and imagined enemies."[134] Consequently, the 2006 Nigerian Prevention of Terrorism bill stirred much controversy and was met with vigorous protests describing it as a "forerunner of possible genocide targeted at […] who dares to challenge government's injustice against citizens."[135] As mentioned previously, Mauritania's former President Ould Taya, although ruling a nominally Islamic state, exploited the antiterrorist theme to crush his opponents, and imprisoned and tortured more than 140 of them under charges of connections with the GSPC and Al-Qaeda.[136]

In summary, the aggressive approach of the American-led antiterrorist campaign in West Africa appears to be largely self-defeating. Its hijacking by local tyrannical regimes has turned it, for growing segments of public opinions and activist organizations, as another strain on the sub-region's aspirations to democratic reform and citizen empowerment.

3 - AFRICOM's Security Paradigm Problem

In this part of the analysis, this study seeks to examine why, from a security perspective *stricto sensu*, AFRICOM failed to have the anticipated appeal for the West African nations. Beyond the growing influence of China and the push back effect of the WOT, AFRICOM's chilly reception in the sub-region of West Africa, as in the continent in general, owed much to the superficiality, lack of forethought, and confusion of the command's underpinning security concept.

31 – A Missing Overarching Security Strategy

Apparently, a critical misstep might have been to skip the fundamental necessity of defining an overall security strategy towards the sub-region that has taken the full measure of the implications of its new strategic importance. Indeed, the recognition of a new strategic setting called for a complete recasting of the security approach to the sub-region in view of establishing a new and comprehensive security framework. That comprehensive framework would have adopted two main characteristics. It would have been comprehensive by determining clearly discernible and long-term objectives and ensuring that they nested under the overall United States' policy towards the sub-region. This essential step would have clarified the intentions and purposes of the command in the eyes of its future African partners, provided consistency to its communication plan, and contributed to reducing the misconceptions that Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, admittedly met in touring the region.[137] It would also have been comprehensive by associating the command's future African partners, at least nominally, and seeking their perspective on the security problems of their sub-region, in an effort to securing their subscriptions early on.

In reality, the fundamental question is whether AFRICOM is the result of a fundamental shift in policy acknowledging the new strategic setting, or whether the command is expected to generate that shift. The creation of a new command does not suffice to create the new security strategy required by the increased importance of West Africa. That new security strategy should have preceded the creation of AFRICOM, and the command would have been no more than one of its instruments. Instead, the command's several changes in orientation give the impression that it operates in a

strategic vacuum. Even though that question, central to the United States' policymaking process, transcends the scope of this study, it bears significant relevance with regard to AFRICOM. In 1947, when the Truman administration took the measure of the rising Soviet threat, it defined a doctrine (Truman doctrine) and a strategy (containment) that provided overall purpose to its instruments of national power. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Monroe doctrine provided a similar consistency in dealing with the European powers, and with regard to Latin America. In both these examples, the political provided a strategic guidance that the military contributed to implement. AFRICOM might struggle with the lack of that overarching purpose. At least, even if it exists, little has been done to ensure its extensive communication to the West African nations. As exposed in the background of this study, the Africa policy of the United States has always lacked consistency, due to the continent's peripheral value for its strategic interests. Since a new strategic setting has developped, in which West Africa occupies a key place, the United States could hardly do without developing a comprehensive security strategy towards that region.

<center>32 – A Shallow Security Concept</center>

In addition to a lack of clearly discernible strategic orientation and clear repartition of roles, it is unfortunate that AFRICOM's pioneering spirit remained limited to interagency integration. Although that preoccupation bore much importance for the command's internal functioning, it would have been even more relevant for the command to pioneer a new security concept in West Africa. AFRICOM could have expected a far better reception if it had succeed in convincing its future partners of its resolution to address their security concerns effectively. A tangible and less shy security package

<center>124</center>

would have ensured the command's success in many of the nations of the sub-region whose primary concern is security. AFRICOM's security concept needed more boldness and a clearly expressed intention to divorce itself from the Somalia syndrome.

Instead, the command put forward little more than a disjointed narrative with as salient elements the WOT, bolstered ACOTA and IMET programs, and the smoky concept of "support to African solutions to African problems." Actually, even that concept did not receive the expected development and remained largely at the level of communication sound bite. For a concept that is the stated "culmination of a 10-year thought process within the Department of Defense", there is a surprising lack of detail on how AFRICOM intends to bridge African peacekeeping capacity gaps."[138] In any case, and contrarily to what the command's architects might have sought, that concept had nothing revolutionary in the eyes of the West Africans who were familiar with it. They had juggled with it for more than a decade, through the French RECAMP (Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capabilities) and American ACRI (African Crisis Response Initiative), and had ended up equating them to "we will not get involved in your problems." For France for instance, that concept provided a convenient disengagement strategy from its former African zone of influence and allowed the realigning of its grand strategy with Europe. Engaging the West African nations on that theme may have helped calm fears of militarism, but it has also given a sense of déjà-vu. As an African security analyst puts it:

> The U.S. officials who have testified on AFRICOM before congressional committees, such as Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Christopher Ryan Henry and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Stephen Mull, among others, have not offered a clear and positive vision of how AFRICOM might actually contribute to African security.[139]

In many aspects, and paradoxically, the reality of AFRICOM's security concept failed to match the expectations created by the announcement of a regional command specific to Africa. Indeed, the anticipated turnaround failed to materialize and one may wonder whether, because of a restricted political margin of maneuver, the command has not given birth to a mouse. Indeed, the particular context of two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, partisan controversy over the WOT, and a lame duck executive, may as well have limited AFRICOM's ambitions in terms of security partnerships, which raises the question of the suitability of its timeline.

Arguably, AFRICOM's non-military focus is a self-defeating argument, for it makes the point of the command's irrelevance. What is the need for a combined command to advance a non-military focused policy? What would the West African nations gain in a partnership with a military command that does not assume its nature? In fact, by tuning down what should have been AFRICOM's master card in selling itself to nations worried with their security, the formidable capabilities of the United States' military, the command's architects might have made a serious strategic error. What is the point of a military command that could not assist them in a meaningful and deliberate way in facing their security problems and who instead, intends to help them face natural disasters and diseases and improve governance transparency? Although there is much sense in interagency integration, there is less sense in developing it under a military command. Putting a civilian mask on the face of a military command is largely considered, in the sub-region, as a disingenuous strategy that is not working.[140] Advancing the card of a benign command, an opaque concept in a context in which West African nations do not deny the United State's legitimacy in seeking to secure its

interests, amounted to fueling distrust and skepticism and charges that AFRICOM is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

33 – A Confusing Communication Plan

Continually changing and conflicting messages about the nature of AFRICOM have compounded the confusion and exacerbated the negative feelings. While Ryan Henry insisted that AFRICOM's purpose was not to wage war, but "to work in concert with (U.S.) African partners for a more stable environment in which political and economic growth can take place," General Ward once stated, "I'd like to have some forward bases in Africa. The world has changed and we are going to make our security. The Halcyon days are over."[141] The reality is that AFRICOM's blurred and protean nature contributed largely in feeding mistrust and skepticism. The president of Botswana, Festus Mogae, already cited in this study, expressed the sentiment of many of his peers:

> We have not taken a position [on AFRICOM] because we don't know how the animal will look like.[142]

The respective roles and places of the departments of state and defense within the United State's policymaking towards West Africa should as well be further clarified without any ambiguity. Considering that this issue has led to a controversial debate internal to the United States' political system, with Congress expressing concerns about DoD encroachments on DoS territory, there is no surprise that the West African nations may have been even more bewildered.[143] DoS and USAID have showed reluctance to support AFRICOM in areas where it was perceived to trespass on their prerogatives, exposing frictions in the interagency scheme of the command.[144] The Commander of AFRICOM, General Ward, made a statement that is largely symptomatic of the lack of

clarity in the interagency concept. He declared his conception of DoD's role in Africa as part of a "three-pronged" United States government approach, with DoD, through AFRICOM, taking the lead on security issues, but playing a *supporting* role to the Department of State, which conducts diplomacy, and USAID, which implements development programs."[145] The problem is that even in security issues, DoS is supposed to be the lead in dealing with foreign nations, for security issues fall under the general umbrella of foreign policy for which it is the lead agency. In fact, even for security issues, common sense would like DoD to play a *supporting* role, at least from a conceptual viewpoint. This should not be an issue left for the West Africans to sort out themselves, for AFRICOM's ambitions in interagency integration should not be at the cost of readability, especially from the standpoint of its partners. For failing to clarify interagency roles and giving an impression of DoD expansionism, the United States' West Africa policy has fed suspicions of neocolonialism and imperialism:

> The much-vaunted inter-agency staff to be included in AFRICOM should be seen for what it is—the further co-option and subjugation of US foreign and development policy to a neocolonial agenda which is inimical to Africa and ironically, to the US itself.[146]

4 - AFRICOM's Mismatch with West Africa's Collective Security Ambitions

In a July 2007 meeting on the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD) held in Lusaka (Zambia), a significant portion of the discussions focused on "AFRICOM's aggressive promotion" and its suspicious coincidence with the "Union Government" proposal.[147] In this final part of the analysis, this study wishes to illustrate how some of its future partners might have perceived AFRICOM as a disturbance, if not an obstacle, for their integration ambitions. This analysis also argues that their negative

reaction to the command might have expressed their preference for a multilateral approach to their security issues, involving the United Nations and the African Union, as opposed to a perceived American unilateral approach. In that regard, AFRICOM's early strategy of securing bilateral partnerships might have raised concerns about the hindering effect it might have on sub-regional and regional efforts to develop collective security systems.

<div align="center">41 - West Africa's Collective Security Option</div>

Much of the initial rebuff that AFRICOM met might have come from a failure to assess correctly the West Africans' current psychology with regard to their security. This failure is probably the result of a fundamental discrepancy in security philosophy. While the Bush administration has demonstrated its strong attachment to state sovereignty and limited consideration for supra-national institutions such as the United Nations, the West African nations have taken a reverse slope and acknowledged the failure of the African state to assume its security responsibilities. After the nationalist trend that had followed colonization, understandable for the purpose of building nations out of artificial constructs, they have come to realize their weakness and incapacity to provide for their security unless they engage in integrated security systems.

African analysts commonly believe that the architects of AFRICOM compromised its promotion strategy by failing to engage with the region's institutions before announcing the command, hence giving the impression that they disparaged the continent's progress in collective security through the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).[148]

At the continental level, the AU, with the Peace and Security Council (PSC) as driving organ, has reached important milestones through the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CASDP) and the work toward creation of the African Standby Force (ASF). Some of these milestones are the legacy of the OAU.

- AU Peace and Security Council: On 25 May 2005, the Fourth ordinary session of the AU Executive Council launched the organization's PSC, as an heir of the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution, and as "a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa."[149]

- Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP): Constitutes the overall framework of collective security initiatives under the AU. According to its establishing protocol, the CADSP is "premised on a common African perception of what is required to be done collectively by African States to ensure that Africa's common defence and security interests and goals […] are safeguarded in the face of common threats to the continent as a whole. In essence, the PSC is only an implementing instrument of the CADSP.[150]

- African Standby Force (ASF): Announced in the protocol on the PSC, the ASF concept is based on five brigades (one per REC) to be provided by the five African regions and to be completed by 2010. These 5,000-troop brigades, comprising military, police and civilian components, are meant to be the instruments of the PSC's peacekeeping initiatives.[151]

- Code of Conduct on Inter-African Relations: Adopted in 1994 in Tunis by the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States of the OAU, this code seeks to "articulate standards for the conduct of inter-state relations, both at the bilateral and continental levels."[152]

- Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in

Africa (CSSDCA): Held in 2000 in Lomé, this conference adopted the Solemn Declaration on CSSDCA aimed at to providing a "framework for coordinating, harmonizing and promoting policies aimed at preventing, containing, and eliminating the pernicious internal and inter-state conflicts in Africa, as well as accelerating regional integration and development on the continent."[153]

At the sub-regional level, under the framework of the ECOWAS, similarly important progress has been made towards completing the security framework. The sub-region's past experience in multinational peacekeeping, through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and its most advanced economic integration in the continent, with the Monetary and Economic Union of West Africa (MEUWA), have significantly facilitated that progress.

- In 1999, ECOWAS modified its founding charter and incorporated the Protocol on Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, the legal basis for security mechanisms in the sub-region.[154]

- Following the adoption of the ECOWAS Security Protocol, the community developed concept plans for the ECOWAS Standby Brigade (ECOBRIG). However, the obligation to respond to the crises in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire has delayed its establishment, as opposed to the IGAD's Eastern Brigade (EASTBRIG).[155]

- In 2002, ECOWAS conducted a successful mediation in the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire and deployed a 1,300-troop operation, the ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ECOMICI), to monitor the cease-fire along with a small UN force and 4,000 French troops, until the deployment of a UN mission in April 2004.[156]

- From June 2003, an ECOWAS force, comprising mainly Nigerian troops, froze the escalating situation in Liberia, stopped the Liberians United for

Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) troops from storming Monrovia, and allowed a political agreement that led to the departure of Charles Taylor.[157]

- On behalf of ECOWAS, the Kofi Annan International Peace Training Center (KAIPTC) has been providing "mission oriented training at the operational level in Peace Operations" to West African peacekeepers since 2002. [158]

In addition to the above initiatives, ECOWAS counts several other policy instruments such as:[159]

- Declaration of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa (1998);
- Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED (1998));
- Code of Conduct for the Implementation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa (1999);
- Decision Establishing National Commissions for the Control of the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Light Weapons (1999).

<u>42 - West Africa's Preference for Multilateral Approaches</u>

Indeed, AFRICOM would have avoided much criticism by establishing early on a collaboration plan with these security institutions and clarifying its relationship with them, for, although still embryonic, this progress is nevertheless noteworthy and fast growing. However, beyond these regional and sub-regional mechanisms, AFRICOM needed a collaboration plan with the United Nations as well, since the Africans' security strategy also relies on hybrid operations with the United Nations Department of

Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), such as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Sudan.[160]

By bypassing this three-layer security system in formation (UN-AU-RECs), AFRICOM has understandably propagated much concern. The architects of the command may have underestimated the Africans' confidence in these systems to ensure their security. In fact, the Africans' resort to these systems is also their acknowledgement that the Western powers, including the United States, had little interest in their security problems. The surveys data below (figure 19) shows the West Africans' high level of confidence in the United Nations and the African Union in addressing their specific security needs. The United Nations in particular, is highly regarded in West Africa, due to its successful peace missions in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire, as well as its numerous programs in the fields of public health, education, culture, and child protection.

Figure 19. What country or international organization should take responsibility for dealing with the greatest threat to the world (as identified in a previous question).
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

Compared to other regions of the world, the approval rates of the United Nations in West Africa are even more impressive (figure 20).

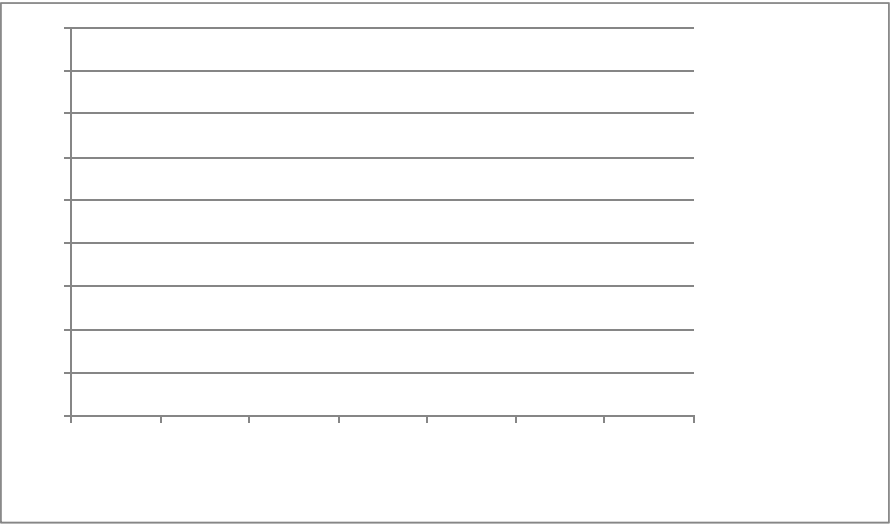Figure 20.   Opinions about the United Nations.
Data Source: Rising Environmental Concerns in 47-Nation Survey: Global Unease With Major World Powers, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 27 June 2007.

Although still in the process of consolidation, the African Union is unmistakably the focus of a great majority of Africans' aspirations to security and unity (figure 21).
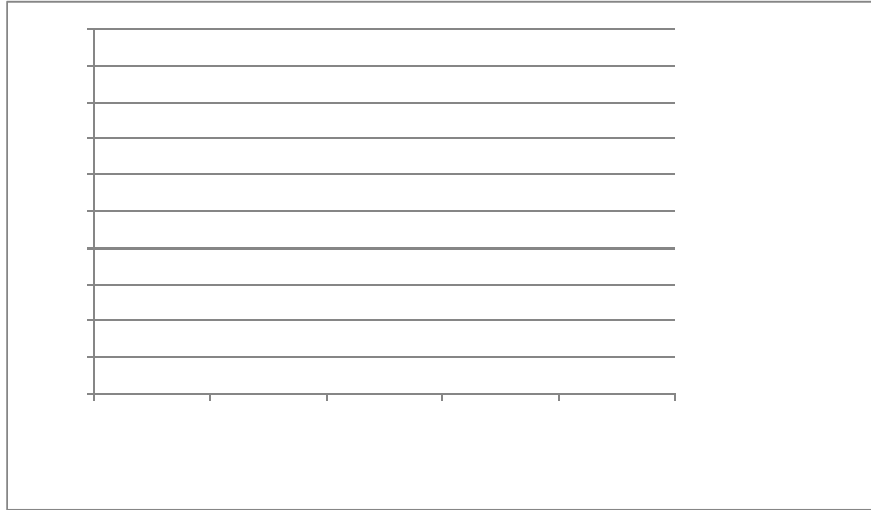
Figure 21.   African Union approval rates.

Data Source: No Global Warming Alarm in the US, China – America's Image Slips, But Allies Share US Concerns over Iran, Hamas. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 13 June 2006.

At the level of political statements, several African leaders have expressed their positions, often intended to be a collective one. The Nigerian President, Yar'Adua, did so in the name of West Africa:

> I did not agree that AFRICOM should be based in Africa. What we discussed with Bush is that if they have something to do for Africa that has to do with peace and security, they should contribute. I told him that we African countries have our own plan to establish a joint military command in every sub-region (as we) have in economic groupings.[161]

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) had been the first institution to issue a clear statement against the command. During a press conference, South Africa's Foreign Affairs Minister Lekuota stated that, at the July 2007 SADC Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) meeting in Dar-es-Salam, the community's defence ministers "took a decision that sister countries of the region should not agree to host AFRICOM and in particular, armed forces, since this would have a

negative effect." He added that this recommendation was presented to the Heads of State and that it was a SADC position.[162]

Another sub-regional organization, the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), has also issued a communiqué from Tripoli that flatly refuses the installation of any military command or any foreign armed presence of whatever country on any part of Africa, whatever the reasons and justifications." (Community of Sahelo-Saharan States rejects any US military presence in Africa 2007)

Had AFRICOM not taken the African Union for granted and established an early dialogue with its leadership, and most of all made a correct assessment of the West Africans' security aspirations and strategies through ECOWAS, it is probable that it could have expected a warmer welcome.[163]

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The rise of the African continent's strategic value, due to its energy stores,

elicited a dramatic change in the United States' Africa policy from "benign neglect" to an

increasing interest. During a press conference preceding his 2008 Africa trip, President

Bush expressed the strategic change in unequivocal terms:

> Africa is also increasingly vital to our strategic interests. We have seen that
> conditions on the other side of the world can have a direct impact on our own
> security.[1]

The most visible manifestation of that dramatic shift has been the creation of a

combatant command dedicated to Africa. AFRICOM, unfortunately, faced a widespread

mistrust on the continent. Media headlines across the continent reflected the Africans'

reluctance towards the new command:

> "The expansion of an American strategic geopolitical military base on the
> continent will worsen many of the problems Africa has at present." - *Business
> Day* (Johannesburg) [2]

> "The African countries should wake up after seeing the scars of others (Iraq and
> Afghanistan)" – *Le Reporter* (Algiers)[3]

> "Increased U.S. military presence in Africa may simply serve to protect unpopular
> regimes that are friendly to its interests, as was the case during the Cold War,
> while Africa slips further into poverty" – Dulue Mbachu (Nigerian journalist)[4]

> African officials also made no mystery of their negative feelings about the

command. Clearly, AFRICOM has run into a wall of skepticism. Abdullahi Alzubedi, the

Libyan ambassador to South Africa declared to a journalist:

> How can the US divide the world up into its own military commands? Wasn't that
> for the United Nations to do? What would happen if China also decided to create
> its Africa command? Would this not lead to conflict on the continent?"[5]

This thesis has striven to identify the main causes of the Africans' distrust towards AFRICOM. Four of them have been identified as the most influential factors:

First, the increasing influence of China is providing the African nations an alternative that, at least in immediate terms, is in many aspects more appealing to some of them. This new strategic parameter bears a tremendous importance for the United States' Africa policy. Its deep significance lies in that it is turning the African continent into one of the key stakes of the upcoming Cold War between the United States and China. Therefore, the resistance to an increased American engagement into the continent should be interpreted as an early sign of an emerging fight over zones of influence. In that fight, China's pragmatic and opportunistic political warfare strategy is winning the first rounds.

Second, the African continent has not remained impervious to the backfiring effects of the American antiterrorist strategy. Beyond the disapproving reaction that has affected other regions of the world, that antiterrorist strategy has handicapped AFRICOM in its approach to the African nations by convincing them of the exclusive self-centeredness of the United States' security concerns in Africa. The WOT has also become a political hot potato for some African nations, especially those with significant Muslim populations who fear its destabilizing and radicalizing effects. In addition, African civil society groups, human rights activists, and political opposition parties are denouncing vigorously its negative impact on civil liberties and democratic reforms.

Third, AFRICOM may have rendered itself irrelevant in the eyes of African leaders who would have welcomed concrete and substantial security assistance from the United States. Undeniably, security remains a high concern in Africa and would have provided a formidable bargaining chip made credible by the backing of the most

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powerful military in the world. However, that strategic leverage has been wasted by putting forward an implausible democratization and humanitarian agenda whose result has been to feed suspicion and incredulity and draw concerns of a militarization of American diplomacy. What African leader would have welcomed a military organization that intends to teach him democracy and good governance?

Finally, AFRICOM's initial bilateral strategy has hindered its gaining acceptance. A more comprehensive assessment of the current diplomatic setting in the African continent would have allowed its architects to identify two essential elements. The first is the continent's commitment to further integration and its preference for resorting to collective security mechanisms to address its instability. The second one, perhaps more crucial, is that this security orientation is driven by the local powerhouses, South Africa, Nigeria, and Libya to some extent, who make a point of thwarting non-African interference. Unsurprisingly, South Africa, Nigeria, and Libya have voiced the most radical opposition against AFRICOM, associating in their rejection of the command the nations of their "zones of influence." A far better strategy would have been to open an early dialogue with the continent's regional structures and negotiate collaboration plans with them.

So as to correct its early missteps, AFRICOM's entry strategy and strategic communication plan should strive to advance the following lines:

<u>Strategy Recommendations:</u>

- Recast the United States' strategy towards Africa in more comprehensive terms so as to provide overall coherence, consistency, and long-term focus. That strategic guidance would acknowledge Africa's new

centrality for the United States' interests and, with regard to the United States' policymaking system, provide political impetus for the mobilization of resources and the development of a dedicated bureaucracy.

- Establish a formal collaboration framework between AFRICOM, the African Union, and the Regional Economic Communities, including joint planning and coordinating structures. A formal recognition of AFRICOM by the African Union's Executive Council and its regional extensions would constitute a critical milestone. Accordingly, AFRICOM should renounce its usual bilateral strategy and focus on collaboration with the continental institutions.

- Elaborate jointly AFRICOM's collaboration strategy with the continent's collective security mechanisms, such as the AU's Peace and Security Council and the RECs' mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. Negotiate Memorandums of Agreement (MOUs) with these structures.

- Redefine AFRICOM's concept and refocus the command on security issues. Maintain the civil, humanitarian, and liberalization agenda under the umbrella of the Department of State and USAID who have already demonstrated their effectiveness in that regard and who, more importantly, have the confidence of the Africans down to the local community level. This would also greatly appease the African political leadership's concerns of a militarization of the United States' Africa policy.

- Bolster AFRICOM's security package and express clearly the United States' commitment to provide logistic and intelligence support to the AU's peace operations. Depending on the circumstances, especially in the context of Chapter VII type missions, AFRICOM's support to these missions could be extended to provide even more air support (transportation and close-air support). The latest evolutions of the command's mission statement tend to indicate that it is adopting a more security focused posture. As of February 2008, the currently proposed mission statement lays emphasis on conducting a "sustained security engagement through military to military programs" and "other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of US foreign policy." This reorientation should be further accentuated and consolidated around negotiated security cooperation mechanisms and combined planning.

- Seize the opportunity of UNAMID's current build-up to demonstrate, through logistic and intelligence support, the United States' resolve in supporting peace initiatives on the continent.

- Focus AFRICOM's training assistance on multilateral terms through the African Standby Force and its regional brigades. This training assistance could be provided through battalion then brigade level exercises, command post exercises, and perhaps the establishment of US-supported peace training centers in each region. The Kofi Annan International Peace Training Center (KAIPTC), for instance, could

provide an interesting laboratory for that concept. AFRICOM could assist

in augmenting the capacity of the center with funds, equipment, and

instructors.

<u>Strategic Communication Recommendations:</u>

- Engage the African political leadership on the actual

rationale behind AFRICOM, so as to eliminate their negative perceptions

against the command. In that regard, a comprehensive strategy document

issued at the political level would be helpful in clarifying the United

States' strategic objectives in the continent. There is little doubt that the

African nations would understand and might even accept the United

States' legitimate right to pursue and protect its global interests.

- Open dialogue with the African civil society and clarify the

objectives of the command and further underline its benefits for the

security and stability of the continent.

- Tune down the antiterrorist narrative and shift it to

addressing specific African security problems. Restore the centrality of

Africa's security problems in AFRICOM's agenda.

- Launch media campaigns throughout the continent to

further emphasize the benevolent nature of AFRICOM and its assistance

agenda.

As described above, the architects of AFRICOM have made some initial missteps

that have not facilitated the acceptance of the command in the continent. However, if

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these remedial actions are taken, and above all, if the United States makes more effort to understand the Africans' point of view, much of the reluctance facing the command could be reduced. There is still time for reframing the United States' Africa policy in a coherent, consistent, and long-term focused paradigm conducive to a the development of a durable and mutually beneficial partnership.

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